

BETWEEN EARTH AND HEAVEN

SYMBOLS AND SIGNS

In memory of Henrieta Todorova



**Muzeul Bucovinei Suceava,
Academia Română-Filiala Iași * Institutul de Arheologie Iași,
Editura Karl A. Romstorfer 2016**

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BETWEEN EARTH AND HEAVEN

SYMBOLS AND SIGNS

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SANCTUARIES”

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In memory of Henrieta Todorova

Edited by

Constantin-Emil Ursu, Adrian Poruciuc, Cornelia-Magda Lazarovici

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IN MEMORY OF HENRIETA TODOROVA (1933-2015)

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On the threshold of spring last year, *the Lady* of Bulgarian archeology Henrieta Todorova, a true friend and colleague, left us. The first time I saw her was at Iași in the mid-seventies, at the University, where she had a presentation on the prehistory of Bulgaria. She impressed me then through her excellence, her knowledge and her firmness. We later met on various occasions, attending international symposiums or during the documentation visits which I took to Bulgaria, but also when she was our guest in Romania (2002; 2007). From my very first documentation visit to Bulgaria, in 1989, I was impressed by her vast authorship, as seen at the library of the Sofia Institute of Archeology.

Henrieta Todorova was one of the most charismatic researchers of Balkan prehistory, a person hungry for knowledge, with contagious energy, wholly passionate about her work. A brief investigation into her activity shows that she researched over 20 sites (of which we mention the tells of Golyamo Delchevo, Ovcharovo, Polyanitsa and Durankulak and the cemeteries of Devnya and Durankulak), wrote 18 reference monographies and over 150 articles.

As a recognition of her merits and activity, she was named Deputy Director of the Institute of Archaeology at Sofia (1989), professor at the Sofia University (1978), and starting 2004 she was a Fellow of the Bulgarian Academy of Science. For her valuable contribution to science she was chosen, in 1978, to be the Corresponding Member of the German Archaeological Institute in Berlin and in 2007 to be an International Member of the Leibnitz society in Berlin. She was also a member of the permanent council of the Union International des Sciences Pré- et Protohistoriques.

Henrieta Todorova perfectly combined field work with research. She understood the role of inter-disciplinary research in archeology and she was a passionate advocate of this type of investigation. She opened new horizons in this area by founding the journal '*Problem group for interdisciplinary investigations*' in 1977 at the Institute of Archaeology in Sofia. She was its editor-in-chief for many years.

Our friend was a top expert of prehistory, well documented not only regarding the realities in the Balkan Peninsula, but also regarding the entire area of South-Eastern Europe. This allowed her to make comparative evaluations and critical analyses of prehistoric realities, as well as to sketch out entire cultural blocks.

Her contribution covers a vast period of time, starting with the Neolithic, through the Eneolithic, the Proto-Bronze age (VI-IV mil. B.C.), as well as the paleo-climate in this part of the world. Her name and activity are closely linked to the definition of several cultures and cultural phases, unknown before, showing their just value in her publications. Through her research, she set the basis for a wide database of information regarding construction techniques, customs, economies, social structures and spiritual life of the Eneolithic population of North-Eastern Bulgaria. By using conclusions from the natural sciences, she was able to formulate hypotheses regarding the end of the eneolithic civilizations due to climate change rather than to population invasion.

At the same time, a great part of her activity was linked to the instruction of future specialists, as a teacher at the universities of Sofia, Veliko Turnovo and the New Bulgarian University in Sofia, and as a doctorate coordinator for many generations. Over the many years of her teaching career, she taught courses at several universities abroad: the University of Bonn, the Mining Academy in Freiberg (Germany) and the Hacettepe University in Ankara. She also lectured at practically all major European universities.

We pointed out only few of the areas in which Henrieta Todorova had an essential contribution to the knowledge and assimilation of Bulgarian prehistory and history, as well as of the south-eastern European region. Henrieta Todorova left us a heritage of impressive scientific treasures and an example of dedication and steadfastness in research.

Rest in peace!

DECOUVERTES ARCHEOLOGIQUES CONCERNANT LES MANIFESTATIONS CULTIQUES DANS LES SANCTUAIRES PALEOLITHIQUES DE L'EUROPE

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Mot-clé: *espace sacre; espace rituel; procession cultique; cérémonies religieuses; spiritualité collective.*

Résumé

A partir de l'idée que l'homme est né avec le sentiment religieux, on peut apprécier que l'existence des religions pendant la Préhistoire, c'est-à-dire le phénomène du sacré du passé éloigné de l'humanité peut constituer une réalité de la vie sociale de l'homme – entité supérieure de l'Univers, commence pendant la Préhistoire.

En directe association avec les pratiques religieuses, d'aujourd'hui comme de la Préhistoire, nous faisons la distinction entre l'espace rituel et l'espace sacré; l'espace rituel ne pouvait pas être, de manière obligatoire, équivalu, y compris par les locations de la manifestation, avec l'espace sacré. L'espace rituel peut devenir sacré seulement à la suite de la répétition des manifestations du sacré collectif, mais aussi par leur efficacité, constatée comme répétition des accomplissements requis; de la sorte, l'espace rituel, des grottes paléolithiques ou de l'extérieur de celles-ci, peut devenir ouvert au sacré, en fonction directe, à notre avis, de l'attitude des pratiquants, des initiés mais aussi peut-être d'un nombre encore plus grand d'adeptes, participants aux manifestations culturelles respectives.

On peut déduire que les premières expressions acoustiques ont été produites par des instruments à vent, du type des phalanges de renne, perforées, découvertes dans la grotte Aurignac. On a démontré que les coquilles perforées peuvent produire des sons, mais il est pas possible d'apprécier que tous ces objets étaient déposés dans les tombeaux comme objets de parure et également comme des « instruments musicaux ». Dans la catégorie des instruments à vent, pour produire des sons, on inclut les tubes en os, à un ou deux orifices, découvertes à Isturitz (France) ou à Geissenklösterle (Allemagne), mais dans le cadre de riches inventaires, considérés comme ayant une importance culturelle, on a identifié des tubes en os à plusieurs perforations longitudinale. Une autre modalité de produire des sons a été celle qui utilisait les os de mammoth, peints ou à motifs géométriques, surtout ceux disposés circulairement dans l'espace d'une habitation de Mezin, Ukraine, datée à 15.000 ans BP. Par la répétition de certains motifs picturaux, Sergej Bibikov a créé la musique obtenue par percussion, que nous considérons comme une modalité d'expression sonore dans le cadre des manifestations culturelles. On considère que dans le cadre des cérémonies religieuses des grottes peintes, la sonorité pouvait être aussi obtenue par la percussion des stalactites, et on induit même l'idée que les motifs picturaux de certains animaux, les modalités choisies pour les représenter (tête tournée, bouche ouverte etc.), mains peints, etc., pouvaient constituer des symboles du rituel religieux.

Les processions culturelles à musique devaient contenir aussi la danse et de ce point de vue, si la statuette de Galgenberg ne représente pas une orante, mais une danseuse, son image semble jusqu'à l'identité avec la représentation, peinte, de la céramique énéolithique (Cârnicieni, Iași). La préservation des traces de pas en plusieurs grottes - sanctuaires, même la peinture de la grotte Fumane, pourraient constituer autant d'éléments de certitude de l'existence de danses rituelles dans le cadre des cérémonies religieuses.

*Notre avis est que l'homme a mis en évidence le caractère sociale de son existence au plus tard en même temps avec les premières manifestations cohérentes du sacré, par les rituels d'enterrements des semblables, avec la conscientisation de la production et de l'utilisation du feu, devenu le plus important facteur de l'environnement. Vers la fin du Paléolithique moyen les preuves de l'existence du sacré, de la spiritualité collective se multiplient, et Homo sapiens crée et établit des règles, comportements, canons, obligatoires pour toute la communauté. La nécessité d'un fait religieux s'est imposée, et nous pouvons constater au moins deux étapes: la **première**, caractérisée par une religion consacrée aux animaux dangereux pour l'homme, comme à Chauvet et Arcy-sur-Cure, appartenant à l'Aurignacien, et la **seconde**, consacrée aux grands herbivores, pendant le Magdalénien, lorsque les animaux dangereux sont peints dans*

des espaces obscures de l'intérieur de la grotte. Entre les deux, les statuettes féminines, représentant la divinité féminine, sont chargées de rôles culturels. En ce sens, nous précisons que nous avons identifié des sanctuaires qui contiennent tous les trois éléments spécifiques importants: créations artistiques, foyers (la présence du feu comme symbole culturel) et tombeaux, qui représentent l'attention accordée aux défunts, comme facteur de continuité spirituelle, de passage et de transmission.

L'existence des cérémonies à aspect religieux, comme partie composante des manifestations culturelles des communautés humaines du Paléolithique moyen et supérieur du territoire de l'Europe ne constitue une énigme, un fait inconnu ou impossible à accepter. Notre tâche, dans cette étude, est d'argumenter, par des découvertes archéologiques et leur interprétation cohérente, les caractéristiques de ces activités sociales, qui représentaient les éléments du sacré collectif. En ce sens, nous sommes d'avis qu'il faut considérer: 1, la définition et les types de sanctuaires pendant le Paléolithique supérieur européen; 2, l'existence possible des sanctuaires appartenant au Paléolithique supérieur européen dans le périmètre des sites de terrasse ou dans les immenses étendues de loess de l'Europe central-nordique; 3, découvertes de matériaux archéologiques qui peuvent démontrer la participation directe aux cérémonies culturelles; 4, découvertes de matériaux archéologiques qui démontrent indirectement la possibilité de l'existence des cérémonies culturelles; 5, exemple de cérémonies à caractère culturel, dans les sanctuaires du Paléolithique supérieur européen.

D'ailleurs, conformément à l'interprétation donnée par certains spécialistes, les auteurs des créations artistiques du Paléolithique supérieur ont laissé des preuves des cérémonies religieuses auxquelles ils ont participé, dans les gravures réalisées, surtout sur des fragments d'os d'animaux. De la sorte, à Raymonden on a découvert une lame en os avec les images de certains gens, sur deux fils, ayant au milieu la tête et les pieds d'un bison; cette création artistique a été interprétée comme représentant « un cortège » (Fig. 1/1-2)¹. Nous précisons aussi que à l'abri de Château des Eyzies on a découvert un fragment de côte, décoré d'images animalières et féminines, en suggérant une procession d'images stylisées, ayant devant elles l'image d'un bison². Dans ce contexte, nous pourrions encadrer, dans la même catégorie de représentations encore une autre image qui à notre avis représente l'idée d'une procession cultique avec des femmes (Fig. 1/3).

Du point de vue de la thématique du Colloque, nous sommes d'avis avoir identifié plusieurs *phénomènes* de la vie des communautés humaines de l'époque paléolithique: 1, cérémonies dédiées au succès de la chasse, pour assurer la nourriture, donc la continuité de la vie; 2, cérémonies occasionnées par la participation des *initiés* à la création des œuvres d'art pariétal ou des pièces d'art mobilier, mises en valeur par la participation de tous les membres de la communauté humaine; 3, les

¹ Defrance 2004: 265-266.

² Defrance 2004: 265-266.

rites d'initiation et/ou de passage, certains comme faits pouvant préfacier la mort; 4, cérémonies liées au phénomène funéraire, peut-être les plus complexes rites et rituels, à un gamme large, encore trop peu connu, d'aspects et éléments du sacré collectif (la déposition d'offrandes funéraires; le creusage et l'aménagement de la fosse du tombeau; la nature et les pratiques de la violence dans la vie et après la mort), etc. Si nous prenions en considération seulement les multiples aspects cérémoniaux des dépositions d'offrandes dans les sépultures, nous constaterions que pendant le Paléolithique supérieur européen, les cérémonies de ces manifestations suite aux impositions du sacré collectif se sont multipliées de telle manière que les spécialistes admettent l'existence des sanctuaires comme édifices liés aux rituels de religiosité des communautés humaines, ou comme élément de leur caractère social, concernant les manifestations individuelles et de groupe. Pendant cette période l'existence des plus importants éléments et manifestations du *phénomène religieux*, de sorte qu'on peut accepter l'idée que pour la quasi-totalité des créations des communautés humaines de la nouvelle époque de la pierre (Néo-Enéolithique) dans le domaine spirituel, *l'archétype* a été créée dans toute l'époque paléolithique, et nous croyons que le phénomène s'est produit y compris dans le cadre des cérémonies cultuelles, existantes surtout dans les sanctuaires, soit dans les grottes, soit dans des sites de plein air. Il ne faut pas omettre intégralement non plus la possibilité que certaines amples et complexes créations artistiques (ensembles de peintures sur les parois ou plafonds des grottes) puissent constituer des éléments de cérémoniaux des communautés humaines respectives. En outre, si l'on admet certaines précisions dans le domaine de l'ethnographie, conformément auxquelles les gens se ramassent périodiquement³ pour socialiser, pour échanger des produits primaires ou des pièces finies, etc., il faudrait prendre en considération ces rencontres périodiques aussi au niveau des communautés humaines du Paléolithique supérieur, dans des buts plus ou moins identiques. Mais ne faut-il pas prendre aussi en considération les efforts concernant les acquisitions de matières premières (coquilles, etc.), de centaines de kilomètres distance par rapport au campement de base ? Dans ces situations l'organisation des cérémonies cultuelles, censées assurer le succès et le retour des personnes parties peut devenir une certitude.

Des spécialistes dans la recherche de la vie des communautés humaines paléolithiques ont reconnu que la découverte puis l'utilisation du *feu*, que le même *homme-démiurge* a créé vers 500.000 BP, l'a fait se reconnaître soi-même comme le maître, le créateur. A l'aide du feu, l'homme a transformé le bois en charbon qu'il a utilisé pour des besoins domestiques, mais aussi pour représenter des animaux, l'univers entier autour de lui, devenant, de la sorte, le créateur des images, des *signes*, du monde et «donnant vie» aux habitats des presque 200 grottes, de France, d'Italie,

³ Clottes 2006: 99-100.

d'Espagne, jusqu'en Roumanie et plus loin, vers l'est. De la même manière, les communautés humaines ont «donné vie» à des habitats des immenses étendues de lœss de l'Europe, qu'il a transformé en sanctuaires⁴, par des créations d'art mobilier, par la création de foyers ou par l'aménagement intentionnel des sépultures, avec la participation de la communauté entière, et où l'on pratiquait des cérémonies spécifiques. L'analyse des découvertes de sépultures ou seulement des dépositions funéraires et des conditions de découvertes, ou du contexte stratigraphique et géo-chronologiques, des accessoires des sépultures, des dépositions d'offrandes, la plupart du temps à caractère rituel (la déposition, parfois abondante de l'ocre rouge ou de l'hématite), mais différent d'une zone géographique à l'autre ou d'une culture archéologique à l'autre, démontrent le fait qu'il n'y a pas eu de pratique ou de *canons* obligatoires, à travers des espaces géographiques larges, ni dans le cadre de la même civilisation archéologique. Nous croyons que les pratiques et les cérémonies rituelles sont parues et se sont multipliées par des activités spécifiques, par l'expérience et des ajouts permanents, par l'association des rites de *passage et transmission*, à des éléments idéologiques et par la socialisation permanente des membres de la communauté. Les pratiques rituelles ont certainement existé, bien que nous ne connaissions que très vaguement certains détails des manifestations cultuelles, mais nous considérons qu'elles s'encadraient en ce que nous nommons le sentiment religieux. Selon nous, *le fait religieux* et ses manifestations, comme éléments spécifiques de la vie religieuse préhistorique, par des cérémonies, étaient liées à l'attitude mentale des praticiens, de sorte que nous pouvons nous référer seulement aux aspects idéologiques de la vie des communautés humaines paléolithiques. Nous ne pouvons pas sortir les manifestations personnelles du contexte de la collectivité, parce que les enterrements étaient par excellence des cérémonies publiques, à caractère social, quel qu'il fût. De la sorte, à partir de l'idée que l'homme est né avec le sentiment religieux⁵, nous pouvons apprécier le fait que le phénomène du sacré du passé éloigné de l'humanité a constitué une réalité de la vie sociale de l'homme. Pourtant, il est possible que les créations artistiques fussent plus importantes que tout ceci, étant des activités collectives, situées à l'intérieur des grottes, lesquelles étaient devenues les sanctuaires des communautés humaines. A partir du Paléolithique supérieur, celles-ci sont devenues des endroits publics, cérémoniaux de consécration, en constituant les premières manifestations à caractère religieux par le contenu et l'amplitude des créations artistiques. Ces considérations s'imposent d'autant plus par le fait prouvé que par l'utilisation de la « méthode Reznikoff »⁶ on a constaté qu'en plus de 80 % des cas étudiés, les œuvres d'art pariétal ont été appliquées dans des salles ayant une très bonne sonorisation, donc à

⁴ Chirica V. 2006: 16-25.

⁵ Chirica V. 2006: 10.

une très bonne acoustique, la densité des images peintes étant en parfaite liaison avec les qualités acoustiques et avec la résonance de l'écho produit par les sons⁷. Nous pouvons prendre en considération y compris le fait, connu par des essais de reconstitution des pièces d'art mobilier, ou des parures corporelles, concernant la quantité de temps nécessaire, par exemple pour le finissage d'une perle en ivoire (approximativement 3 heures), multiplié par les milliers d'exemplaires découverts jusqu'à présent⁸, auxquels nous ajoutons les autres offrandes, très nombreux et variés (nous nous référons seulement à ceux découverts dans des sépultures); de la sorte, nous pouvons arriver à la constatation de l'obligation du travail collectif, de plusieurs membres de la communauté, donc des manifestations, y compris des cérémoniaux, au début et/ou lors de la finition des pièces produites. Evidemment, nous déduisons le temps – chronologiquement parlant (l'encadrement chronologique des découvertes) et nous arrivons à des conclusions importantes concernant l'amplitude de l'effort déposé par les communautés humaines du Paléolithique supérieur à l'égard de la satisfaction des obligations imposées par le sacré collectif. Nous apprécions encore une fois le fait qu'il faut démontrer de la cohérence dans notre analyse et dans l'interprétation des découvertes archéologiques, surtout de celles qui dépendent de ce que nous avons désigné par le syntagme l'existence du *fait sacré*. De la sorte, même si nous admettons que pendant la Préhistoire ancienne la création artistique soit le résultat de mutations génétiques⁹, nous ne pouvons pas encore laisser de côté l'amplitude et la diversité des manifestations du phénomène artistique.

Revenant au thème du Colloque, nous considérons que la définition la plus importante du sanctuaire est celle fournie par un Dictionnaire célèbre: *édifice religieux, en général, endroit sacré, saint*¹⁰. Evidemment, selon nous, le syntagme contient plusieurs notions, auxquelles il faudra nous référer: religion, art religieux, espace rituel, espace sacré, cérémonies cultuelles, rites de passage, et aussi aux types d'aspects sacraux pratiqués par les communautés humaines du Paléolithique supérieur européen. Evidemment, l'appel à la paléoethnologie est très nécessaire, car, pour les périodes de temps et pour les cultures archéologiques de la Préhistoire, nous avons seulement la possibilité d'interpréter la nature des découvertes archéologiques, de chercher et de trouver, d'une manière cohérente, l'explication de la création spirituelle des communautés humaines, de chercher à identifier les modalités d'utilisation des artefacts avec les possibles implications dans la nature du sacré collectif, des cérémonies cultuelles, mais surtout des sanctuaires. En ce sens, nous considérons

⁶ Reznikoff, Duvois 1988: 238-246.

⁷ Weinberger 2014: 85-86.

⁸ White 2006: 34-35.

⁹ Klein 2006: 37-40.

¹⁰ *Grand Larousse* vol. 9, 1993: 2749.

qu'il est obligatoire à ne pas exagérer l'existence de ces cérémonies, et ni de diminuer ou d'«argumenter» l'inexistence des manifestations cultuelles. Par exemple, nous considérons qu'il est possible qu'il existe des sanctuaires aussi en dehors des grottes peintes, là où l'on a identifié, par des recherches archéologiques systématiques, l'existence des structures de combustion (la sacralité du feu à multiples valences: de purification, de lumière et de chaleur, etc.), des sépultures (la sacralité des sépultures à de nombreux éléments et faits de sacralité), des œuvres d'art mobilier (à attributs de sacralité par la création spirituelle même des communautés humaines)¹¹. De la sorte, nous ne croyons pas pouvoir certifier l'existence de cérémonies cultuelles seulement par la découverte d'un objet à siffler (qui pouvait produire des sons), trouvé parmi les pièces en silex ou en autres roches, si d'autres éléments de fine observation archéologique n'ont pas de liaison avec les possibles manifestations cultuelles et ne peuvent être ajoutés à l'«inventaire» cérémonial (même par la nature de nos connaissances d'aujourd'hui). Dans le même ordre, de l'existence des cérémonies cultuelles, nous pouvons prendre en considération la découverte d'un bloc peint, de la Grotte Fumane, où, selon nous, on a représenté le chasseur, danser et tenir dans la main le trophée résultant du succès de la chasse – le zoomorphe¹² (Fig. 2).

En ce sens, Mircea Eliade¹³ écrivait: «Travaillant avec silex ou avec une aiguille primitive, liant des peaux d'animaux ou des panneaux de bois, préparant une ligne de pêche ou une pointe de flèche, modelant une statuette en terre glaise (ou en toute autre matière première), l'imagination décèle des analogies insoupçonnées entre les différents niveaux du réel: les outils et les objets sont chargés de nombreux symbolismes, le monde de la chose – le micro-univers qui confisque l'attention de l'artisan (*créateur, démiurge*, s. n.) pour longtemps – devient un centre mystérieux et sacré, riche en significations». L. Blaga¹⁴ écrivait que «L'idée de pouvoirs ou des substances <magiques> représente, en dernière analyse, une fantasmie de l'esprit humain. Cette fantasmie s'est avérée d'une persistance presque incroyable, si l'on tient compte de son caractère irrationnel, paradoxal, impossible», et cette *nécessité* a été possible grâce aux conditions hostiles d'environnement, dans lesquelles l'homme a dû survivre. Herder, cité par L. Blaga¹⁵, précisait: «*Voilà enfin l'homme... au milieu d'un monde plein d'ennemis et de dangers mortels, une créature fluette, sans armes naturelles, mises devant les bêtes douées de coins et de griffes, à fourrure et peaux corneuses, qui étaient dix fois plus fortes, plus rapides, ... tout nu, exposé aux vicissitudes de toutes les intempéries*

¹¹ Chirica V. 2006: 10.

¹² Broglio, Dalmeri (a cura di) 2005; Bertola, Broglio, Gurioli, de Vecchi, De Stefani, Facciolo, Fiore, Tagliacozzo, Pallecchi 2009; Chirica V. 2006a: 193-198; Chirica V., Chirica V.-C., Bodi 2015: 110-111.

¹³ Eliade 1991: 43.

¹⁴ Blaga 1976: 133.

¹⁵ Blaga 1976: 126-127.

et de tout climat, cherchant sa nourriture... ». Selon Cl. Levi-Strauss¹⁶, l'art créé par les chasseurs paléolithiques avait la moindre utilité pratique, mais le plus grand impact dans le système des symboles. De la sorte, à commencer par le Paléolithique supérieur, l'art et les symboles se multiplient et se diversifient selon les conceptions, nécessités, découvertes, impositions (*canons*) produits par l'évolution de la société humaine.

Parmi les plus importants éléments des cérémonies cultuelles de l'espace des sanctuaires, nous pouvons faire appel à l'association de ces scènes à la musique. On connaît le fait que les premières formes acoustiques se sont produites par des instruments à siffler, du type des phalanges de renne, perforées, découverts dans la Grotte Aurignac, ou dans d'autres gisements, même si la majorité des expériences dans le domaine n'ont été faites qu'au XXe siècle, lorsque de tels objets se sont multipliés dans les espaces des niveaux d'habitat, surtout en association à d'autres éléments cultuels. On a aussi démontré que les coquilles intentionnellement perforées pouvaient eux aussi produire des sons, et nous pouvons ainsi considérer que tous ces objets étaient déposés dans les sépultures comme objets de parure mais aussi au rôle d'« instruments de musique ». Dans la catégorie des instruments à siffler, pour produire des sons, on peut inclure les tuyaux en os, à un ou deux orifices, d'Isturitz (France), Geissenklösterle (Allemagne), Cosăuți sur le Dniestr, etc. De la sorte, on sait que dans le cadre de riches inventaires, considérés d'importance cultuelle, on a identifié des tuyaux en os à plusieurs perforations longitudinales, du type des sifflets de nos jours. A Poiana Cireșului - Piatra Neamț on a découvert plusieurs phalanges de renne, perforées, et à Cosăuți, sur le Dniestr, des tuyaux qui aurait pu avoir le même rôle, raisons pour lesquelles nous avons aussi inclus ces deux sites parmi les sanctuaires du Paléolithique supérieur européen.

On a considéré qu'une modalité différente pour la production des sons utilisait les os de mammouth, peints à motifs géométriques, surtout ceux disposés circulairement dans l'espace d'une habitation de Mezin, Ukraine, datée à 15.000 ans BP. Observant la répétition de certains motifs picturaux, Sergej Bibikov a créé la musique obtenue par percussion, qui pouvait représenter une modalité d'expression sonore dans le cadre des cérémonies cultuelles. On considère aussi¹⁷ que dans le cadre des manifestations religieuses des grottes peintes, la sonorité pourrait être obtenue aussi par la percussion des stalactites, et on avance même l'idée que la nature des motifs picturaux de certains animaux, modalités de représentation (la tête tournée, la bouche ouverte etc.), pourraient constituer des symboles des cérémonies religieuses, avec la participation de tous les membres de la communauté, ou seulement des *initiés*.

¹⁶ Levi-Strauss 1989.

¹⁷ Duvois 1994: 19-22.

Les processions cultuelles à musique devaient inclure la danse, comme manifestation de toute la communauté. De ce point de vue, nous avons en vue le fait que la statuette de Galgenberg, qui représente une danseuse, et son image ressemble jusqu'à l'identité à la représentation peinte, de la céramique énéolithique (Cârnicieni, Iași) (Fig. 3/1; Fig. 3/2). Nous croyons que les femmes stylisées de Gonnersdorf¹⁸ pourraient représenter l'image de danseuses, dans le cadre des cérémonies cultuelles (Fig. 4), comme les chasseurs - sorciers, habillés en peaux d'animaux, mais représentés danser, évidemment dans le cadre de cérémonies cultuelles de grande importance pour le succès de la chasse (Fig. 5). H. Breuil (cf. J. Clottes¹⁹) a certifié nos opinions plus anciennes concernant l'appartenance religieuse de certaines cérémonies cultuelles requises par le succès des communautés humaines lors de la chasse, donc à l'assurance de la continuité de la vie²⁰.

La préservation des traces des pas, d'autres représentations (la gravure de certaines figures zoomorphes à Niaux, France, ou des empreintes de pas d'hommes et d'animaux à Lascaux, d'autres traces de pas à Fumane, Italie, des empreintes de mains sur les parois de certaines grottes, qui n'ont pas été effacées par les membres des communautés respectives, etc.) en plusieurs grottes-sanctuaires, même la peinture de la Grotte Fumane pourraient constituer autant d'éléments de certitude de l'existence de cérémonies à danses rituelles dans le cadre des manifestations religieuses²¹. De la sorte, la présence des empreintes sur le sol d'habitat, non détériorées par les habitants de la grotte nous détermine à croire qu'il y avait des cérémonies religieuses, spécifiques à certaines communautés humaines, démontrant l'existence des scénarios bien établies et interprétés.

Les plus importantes et significatives preuves concernant l'existence de cérémonies cultuelles en n'importe quel type de sanctuaire du Paléolithique supérieur européen sont constituées par le phénomène funéraire, avec toutes ses composantes. Dans la Grotte de Chapelle-aux-Saints on a découvert les premières sépultures néanderthaliennes de France, à aménagements spéciaux, avec la déposition du mort dans des conditions rituelles, en position pliée, associé à des offrandes d'os d'animaux et à outils en pierre. Cette découverte a une double signification: campement humain moustérien et la présence des sépultures, l'ensemble étant considéré par les découvreurs comme un fait très important: *L'homme que nous avons trouvé a été intentionnellement enseveli* ²². Les découvreurs ont précisé aussi le fait que dans cette grotte *l'on serait venu faire de nombreux repas funéraires*, ce qui démontre l'existence de pratiques et cérémonies mortuaires et post-mortuaires

¹⁸ Bosinski 1990: 123.

¹⁹ Clottes 2006: 93.

²⁰ Chirica V. 1982: 229-231; Chirica V. 1983: 38-44.

²¹ Chirica V., Chirica V.-C., Bodi 2015: 124-126.

²² Bouyssonie A., Bouyssonie J., Bardon 1909: 513-517.

spécifiques, à caractère de continuité. Il faut avoir en vue aussi l'existence de multiples éléments de «scénarios» de la déposition des hommes, d'après le visage et la ressemblance, dans des conditions spéciales, de protection et conservation dans l'idée du retour à la vie terrestre, certainement dans le cadre de cérémonies spécifiques. Le respect, de manière presque stricte, de l'orientation des sépultures, sur la direction est-ouest, démontre l'existence d'une harmonie céleste pour la *destinée des morts*²³. Mais nous ne pouvons et ne devons pas pourtant ignorer les possibilités d'ordre social, donc spirituel, même religieux, des populations néanderthaliennes. Nous nous référons aux observations de M. Otte²⁴, mais aussi d'autres exégètes, concernant l'existence du *fait* religieux dès l'époque du Paléolithique moyen européen.

Le feu a constitué depuis toujours le milieu de socialisation des communautés humaines de tous les espaces géographiques, à partir de son utilisation consciente; le feu a représenté aussi l'élément de différenciation permanente entre l'homme et l'animal: l'homme s'est approché du feu, il a connu ses bénéfices, il l'a utilisé en permanence, à la différence de l'animal, qui n'a pas pu s'approcher du feu: la flamme – comme lumière intense et puissante, ou la chaleur émanée ont constitué l'élément de rejet, de peur, en créant la différence totale entre les deux éléments du monde vivant. Donc, depuis les débuts de son utilisation, le feu a eu un rôle très important en ce qui concerne la socialisation des membres de la communauté (les gens se ramassaient autour du feu pour se protéger et faisaient connaître toutes leurs connaissances), même métaphysiquement, par l'extension et l'accentuation des relations, de la conscience collective, y compris dans le cadre des cérémonies cultuelles. Nous n'omettons pas, nous pouvons même accepter l'utilisation du feu dans des cérémonies cultuelles des grottes ou du dehors de celles-ci. Une catégorie de vestiges de grande importance est représentée par les fours pour faire brûler les statuettes de terre glaise, de Dolni Vestonice (et aussi d'autres sites du Paléolithique supérieur européen). C'est ici qu'on a identifié une habitation de type hutte, à l'intérieur de laquelle se trouvaient cinq foyer et une sépulture; la seconde structure d'habitat, toujours de type hutte, abritait ce qu'on a ultérieurement abrité le four à céramique. Dans le périmètre de cette structure on a découvert plus de 2.000 fragments de terre glaise²⁵. L. Iakovleva²⁶ précise qu'à Dolni Vestonice il existe des sculptures modelées en terre glaise, mais de telles créations artistiques ont été découvertes aussi dans certains sites de Sibérie, telle Maininskaja²⁷. De ce point de vue, on peut admettre le caractère régional, non pas local, de la

²³ Otte 1996: 191.

²⁴ Otte 2011: 50-54; Otte 2011a: 79-82.

²⁵ Djindjian, Kozłowski, Otte 1999: 192; Iakovleva 1999: 93-120; Iakovleva 2013: 237-270; Bougard 2013: 301-306; Oliva 2002: 191-214; Oliva 2013: 271-299; Bader, Bougard 2011: 465-504; Svoboda 1995: 258-272, etc.

²⁶ Iakovleva 2013: 249-251.

²⁷ Abramova 1995.

production des statuettes²⁸. Sur la base des études dans le domaine, sur les civilisations néo-énéolithiques, on peut créer la certitude de l'utilisation des statuettes féminines (peut-être d'autres aussi, telles les statuettes animalières), dans des cérémoniaux «laïques» (nous ne voulons pas inclure ici ceux appartenant au phénomène funéraire) des grottes et des sanctuaires aménagés de plein air.

On considère qu'il y a eu des relations complémentaires entre les sépultures et les structures de combustion, à partir du Paléolithique Moyen, dans le cadre de campements; à commencer par le Paléolithique supérieur et pendant l'Epipaléolithique-Mésolithique, le phénomène se généralise²⁹; selon nous, cette pratique rituelle est devenue un élément important de cohésion des membres de la communauté dans la plupart des campements. Nous accordons une attention spéciale aux découvertes de Lagar Velho (Estremadura, Portugal), où le corps d'un enfant de 5 ans a été déposé dans une sépulture située près du parois de la grotte, à la profondeur de 0,30 m; la fosse a été intentionnellement aménagée, et les funérailles ont eu lieu dans le cadre d'une cérémonie spéciale, car le corps était déposé en position étendue sur le dos, les pieds légèrement pliés; avant l'inhumation une branche de *Pinus silvestris* a été brûlée au fond de la fosse³⁰, fait qui, dans notre interprétation, désigne l'intention de purification de l'«endroit du repos éternel» de l'enfant (Fig. 6), sachant que «le feu est la plus légitime forme de purification»³¹. Le feu purificateur a été aussi utilisé dans le cas d'autres cérémonies spécifiques aux enterrements, car on a découvert des sépultures du groupe Kostenki, parmi lesquelles on remarque celui du niveau II de Kostenki 8, où, par l'analyse des os crâniens on a constaté l'existence des traces de taille - perforation, pratiquée par l'homme âgé de 35-40 ans, et certains fragments crâniens ont souffert l'action du feu, étant tous localisés dans le périmètre d'une habitation, près du foyer, à côté d'autres restes osseux, probablement du même squelette³². Les exemples peuvent continuer, car il existe un grand nombre de sépultures aménagées spécialement, où par des recherches archéologiques on a constaté l'utilisation intentionnelle du feu *purificateur* dans le cadre du cérémonial d'enterrement. Nous ne voulons pas exagérer l'utilisation intentionnelle du feu dans les cérémoniaux laïques ou religieux des communautés humaines du Paléolithique Supérieur européen. D'ailleurs les preuves disponibles à cet égard ne sont pas suffisantes; tous les travaux consultés se réfèrent à ces aspects seulement sur la base des études ethnographiques, ou d'*informateurs* contemporains (des XIXe et XXe siècles). En outre, nous croyons que nous exagérons si nous affirmons que, dans le domaine des pratiques religieuses il y a eu

²⁸ Bougard 2013: 301-306.

²⁹ Groenen 1997: 17-50.

³⁰ Zilhão, Trinkaus 2002: 134-143.

³¹ Coelho 2011: 154.

³² Sinitsyn 2004: 238-240.

une très grande gamme de manifestations, dont certaines spécifiques seulement à certaines communautés humaines, presque sans lien direct ou sans impositions au niveau de la culture archéologique de l'aire géographique de manifestation.

Le feu a été utilisé par les communautés humaines pour sa valeur spirituelle, par la lumière et la chaleur, et parfois par l'utilisation de la fumée, des charbons et de la cendre, tel que le démontrent les études ethnologiques. A. van Gennep³³ considère que dans le cadre des rites *de passage*, l'inhalation de la fumée sacrée était un moyen de reconnaître l'importance du foyer et du feu; on a aussi constaté que dans le cas de certaines populations, les corps des morts étaient temporairement déposés dans la sépulture initiale, à cérémonies spécifiques; le rit principal consistait dans l'écartement de la viande des os, ou l'attente du processus naturel de décharnement, mais la plupart des fois, le phénomène de putréfaction se déroule plus vite à l'aide du feu; y suivait le rituel proprement-dit, à étapes successive de cérémonies: tous les participants portaient un morceau de bois, qu'il jetait dans le feu spécialement aménagé par les femmes et ensuite les hommes ramassaient les os brûlés, les mettaient dans un vase déposé dans la maison du mort, puis, dans le cadre d'une autre cérémonie cultuelle, d'union du mort avec le monde sous-terrain, on chantait des chansons, la femme qui portait le vase à os et cendre chantait et dansait; enfin, l'urne était déposée dans une fosse, laquelle était couverte d'une pierre. Nous ne savons pas certainement si ces cérémonies cultuelles étaient organisées à l'intérieur d'une grotte-sanctuaire, ou de plein air, mais nous apprécions que, dans le cadre des enterrements, chaque cérémonial funéraire pouvait constituer un sanctuaire spécial, par la sacralisation de la personne décédée. Nous croyons qu'il y a eu des communautés humaines, où ceux restés en vie étaient obligés d'accorder une attention spéciale aux morts, par des dépositions d'offrandes mortuaires, par des cérémonies spéciales; dans le cas contraire, on croyait que les morts pouvaient devenir vengeurs. Peut-être que c'est de cette manière qu'on peut interpréter les cérémoniaux de dépositions des dalles de pierre au-dessus des corps des morts – adultes et enfants. Sur la base d'informations ethnographiques, A. van Gennep³⁴ a constaté qu'il y a eu, seulement dans les périodes historiques, une variété extraordinaire de manifestations cultuelles dédiées aux morts (pour ne pas devenir des vengeurs) ou une surprenante variété des rites de passage.

D'autres nombreuses épreuves de sacralité des cérémonies dans les sanctuaires du Paléolithique supérieur européens en dehors de ceux-ci sont constituées par la spiritualité de la déposition d'offrandes, des activités obligatoires et dans le cadre de l'Épipaléolithique et le Mésolithique du territoire européen et d'autres espaces géographiques. Nous précisons encore une

³³ Van Gennep 1909: 79; Van Gennep 1996: 135-136.

³⁴ Van Gennep 1996: 134-165.

fois que, selon nous, la triple sépulture de Sungir (Russie), ou celles du «groupe Kostenki» peuvent être considérées de véritables sanctuaires des enterrements du Paléolithique Supérieur européen. On y ajoute les sépultures des grottes italiennes, à tant de sépultures, chacune à ses propres traits en ce qui concerne les cérémonies spécifiques aux dépositions d'offrandes. Même si nous acceptons l'idée de l'existence d'éléments d'anthropophagie rituelle il est compréhensible que *le fait sacré* se passât dans le cadre de cérémonies spécifiques, par lesquelles on incluait l'idée de reconnaissance des vertus idéologiques (et non seulement) de ceux *consacrés*. La mort a été perçue temporaire, comme une partie du sommeil, tel que l'indique les sépultures découvertes à squelettes entiers, en position anatomique, enterrés «dans la position du sommeil»³⁵.

En ce qui concerne la triple sépulture de Sungir, datée à approximativement 25.000 ans BP, à un homme et deux enfants, déposés à côté, mais inversement orientés, nous voyons qu'il s'agit d'un «complexe clos», qui contient le plus riche inventaire funéraire du Continent entier. Les trois morts ont été déposés étendus sur le dos, les enfants (un garçon de 12-13 ans et une fille de 8-9 ans) étant placés à côté de l'homme, mais en position tête-à-tête. L'inventaire funéraire de l'homme était représenté de 3.500 perles entières et fragmentaires en ivoire de mammouth, 25 de bracelets en ivoire, certaines à traces de peinture, perforés aux bouts pour être liés entre eux, déposés dans la zone des avant-bras et des hanches, un pendentif en schiste, peint avec du rouge et à décor ponctiforme, déposé au cou, un autre pendentif zoomorphe, fragmentaire, à décor ponctiforme sur les deux surfaces, un disque en ivoire, perforé, plusieurs dents de renard, perforés, des outils en pierre, parmi lesquels un couteau en silex. Le garçon avait des offrandes composées de plus de 4.900 perles en ivoire de mammouth, 250 canines de renard polaire, perforés, un pendentif zoomorphe, déposé sur la poitrine, une aiguille, au cou, étant estimé qu'elle fermait un accessoire vestimentaire, une sculpture zoomorphe sous l'épaule gauche, un fragment de fémur humain, poli et rempli d'ocre rouge (déposé sous la partie gauche du thorax), une lance en ivoire de mammouth, longue de 2,42 m, un disque en ivoire de mammouth, à perforation centrale et décoré par des fils radiaux. La fillette avait des offrandes mortuaires formées de: 5.200 perles identiques à celles des autres inhumés, déposés le long du corps, des deux côtés, une lance en ivoire de mammouth, de seulement 1,66 m, deux petit bâtons en corne, perforés, dont l'un décoré à fils de points approfondis, trois disques à perforation centrale et à rayons radiaux (comme ceux du garçon)³⁶ (Fig. 7).

Tous les spécialistes acceptent le caractère unique de cette triple sépulture, peut-être comme signe de la hiérarchisation sociale, mais nous constatons la présence du fémur humain, plein d'ocre

³⁵ Bosinski 1990: 28.

³⁶ Kozłowski 1992: 44-46; Chirica C.-V. 1996: 33-35; Djindjian, Kozłowski, Otte 1999.

rouge appartenant avec certitude à un individu non-identifié, et qui aurait dû servir, selon les critères du phénomène religieux, seulement au garçon et à la fille, car le corps de l'homme avait été couvert d'ocre rouge. En outre, si nous prenons en considération le fait que les deux enfants n'ont pas été inhumés en même temps avec l'homme, mais que leur descendance aurait pu être une certitude, nous pourrions considérer que ceux-ci auraient dû suivre, par la voie héréditaire, à la direction de la communauté, et les offrandes, spécifiques aux adultes, représentaient la preuve de la maturité du point de vue cultuel. Nous ajoutons aussi que les offrandes ne représentaient pas de restes de faune, et nous voyons à Sungir le plus complexe monument funéraire du Paléolithique Supérieur européen. La sacralité de cette sépulture ne peut être doutée et nous croyons que les deux enfants de Sungir sont morts parce qu'ils n'ont pas survécu aux obligations imposées par les cérémonies *de passage* de l'enfance à l'étape adulte, de la phase profane, à celle de sacralité.

A Kostenki 15, un enfant de 6-7 ans a été placé en position pliée, sur un couteau en os, dans le périmètre d'une habitation, dans une fosse de forme ovale, à ocre rouge et jaune. Le défunt était déposé sur un «lit» artificiel, formé de deux types de terre glaise, jaune et gri, de provenance allogène. La sépulture a été couverte de terre et d'os, y compris une omoplate fragmentaire de mammoth; par l'écroulement de celle-ci, les os de l'inhumé ont été disloqués: le crâne est tombé dans une partie de la fosse, et le reste du squelette, de l'autre côté. Les offrandes funéraires étaient composées de pièces en silex, parmi lesquelles 10 grattoirs, 1 *perçoir*, lames et éclats (produits secondaires de débitage), un couteau, un polisseur, un aiguille en os, un modèle spécial d'objets de parure signifiant la coiffure, à plus de 150 dents de renard polaire, perforés.

On a remarqué aussi la sépulture d'un nouveau-né, d'environ 10 jours, protégé de peaux d'animaux, à Kostenki 12, niveau I. En ce site nous pouvions constater une pratique rituelle, observée aussi dans certains enterrements du Portugal, mais aussi à certaines populations antiques, auxquelles le mort était rituellement enveloppé dans une peau d'animal³⁷.

Un grand nombre d'enterrements a été découvert en Italie. On remarque les quatre grottes: la Grotte des Enfants, Baouso da Tore, Barma Grande et Barma de Caviglione, à 12 sépultures, dont 10 étaient antérieures à la date de 15.000 ans BP. A travers le territoire de l'Italie, l'existence de plus de 50-70 sépultures a été précisée, dont 7 doubles et 1 triple, en total y étant enterrés plus de 60 individus³⁸. Les spécialistes italiens³⁹ ont constaté au moins deux périodes chronologiques des enterrements: « la période ancienne », l'Aurignacien-Gravettien et la période récente, le Paléolithique

³⁷ Eliade 1992: 177.

³⁸ Giacobini 1999: 29.

³⁹ Palma di Cesnola 2003: 131-139; Henry-Gambier 2005: 213-229; Henry-Gambier 2013: 307-330.

supérieur avancé, donc Epigravettien final, à sépultures à trais spécifiques, bien que certains éléments funéraires se trouvent dans les deux périodes. A Grimaldi – *Grotte des Enfants*, (GA) deux sépultures ont été datées entre 25.000 et 20.000 ans BP, mais on n'exclut pas leur datation dans une étape initiale de l'Epigravettien⁴⁰. GE 1 et GE 2 contenaient deux enfants, de 4 et de 5-6 ans, allongés sur le dos, *côté-à-côté*, ayant chacun le bassin enveloppé d'une «ceinture» formée de plus de mille coquilles perforées. GE 3 contenait une femme adulte, associée à de nombreuses coquilles (*Trochus*), déposée avec un/une adolescent(e) (GE 6); GE 4 contenait un homme adulte, allongé sur le dos, les mains pliés; les offrandes funéraires étaient: des coquilles perforées, des outils en silex, des dents de cerf, perforées; la tête et les pieds étaient couverts de structures de pierre, déposées, selon nous, dans le même but: de ne pas laisser le mort quitter « l'endroit de repos éternel ».

A Barma Grande une sépulture (BG1) a été aménagée tout près de l'entrée, à la profondeur de 8,40 m, un autre, triple (BG 2-3-4) à quelques mètres de la première, à la profondeur de 8,00 m; deux autres sépultures (BG 5-6) ont été aménagées l'une à côté de l'autre, au fond de la grotte, à la profondeur de 6,40 m.

La grotte d'Arene Candide a offert, parmi les 16 fosses de sépultures⁴¹, une fosse très bien conservée, qui appartenait à un adolescent, déposé *en decubitus dorsal*, dans une fosse aménagée avec de l'ocre rouge à sa base et à l'intérieur; il s'agit de la célèbre *sépulture de «Jeune Prince»*. Les offrandes étaient formées de coquilles de *Ciclope neritea* (déposées au niveau des genoux), et à la tête il y avait les dents perforées, de cerf, les pendentifs gravés, en os ou en ivoire; un possible accessoire vestimentaire était orné d'une queue d'écureuil; 4 bâtons perforés, en corne d'élan, complétaient les offrandes. Une lame grande en silex, de 25 cm, était déposée dans la main droite. Le squelette était couvert d'ocre rouge. La fosse de la sépulture était située dans la première salle de la grotte, à la profondeur d'environ 7 m. Comme dans d'autres situations d'Italie, l'industrie lithique a été encadrée dans le Gravettien et l'Epigravettien⁴². La sépulture est antérieure à la date de 18.560 ± 210 ans BP⁴³. Nous précisons qu'à Arene Candide on a découvert aussi les sépultures II, V-IX, XI, considérés comme étant d'époque mésolithique, datées entre 11.750 ± 95 BP et 10.910 ± 90 BP⁴⁴, donc nous pouvons constater l'existence d'un véritable sanctuaire utilisé comme endroit de repos éternel pour les morts. Mais, l'existence des cérémonies cultiques reste incontestable.

⁴⁰ Giacobini 1999: 30.

⁴¹ Broglio 1996: 289-298.

⁴² Martini, Sarti 1990: 124-126.

⁴³ Giacobini, Malerba 1995: 173-186.

⁴⁴ Giacobini 1999: 32.

Dans d'autres sites dans des grottes (Grotte delle Veneri, Grotte Romanelli, Grotte-abri du Romito, Grottes San Teodoro, Ostumi), on a découvert des sépultures simples ou doubles. On remarque Ostumi 1, avec une jeune femme enterrée enceinte (le crâne de l'enfant non né était situé dans le bassin de la femme, situation unique dans le Paléolithique supérieur européen). Tous les squelettes étaient accompagnés d'offrandes funéraires, en général des mêmes types: canines perforées, coquilles perforées, ocre rouge et autres⁴⁵. Nous observons aussi qu'à travers tout l'espace géographique européen, pendant le Paléolithique et l'Épipaléolithique - Mésolithique, les dépositions d'offrandes mortuaires et l'utilisation de l'ocre rouge ou de l'hématite constitue une constante dans les rituels et manifestations cultiques d'enterrement, ou de sacralisation de la violence⁴⁶. Dans la même direction, il faut prendre en considération aussi la déposition de cornes de cerf et de renne dans la bouche des défunts ou dans le périmètre des sépultures, *gest culturel* que nous interprétons comme représentant le phénomène de la substitution (Fig. 9; Fig. 10). Nous prenons aussi en considération l'enfant de Teshik Tash, dont le corps avait été protégé par plusieurs paires cornes de renne, foncées autour de son corps, dans la sépulture. Même si, comme nous l'avons précisé⁴⁷, notre espace géographique s'est situé à la périphérie des grandes aires culturelles de l'Europe préhistorique, nous constatons que dans la zone des Portes de Fer, sur la Vallée du Danube, on a aussi découvert des sépultures d'inhumation à de nombreuses offrandes, déposés dans le cadre des cérémonies culturelles spécifiques.

E. Morin⁴⁸ écrivait qu'«il n'existe pratiquement aucun groupe humain qui abandonne ses morts ou qui les abandonne sans rite». Donc, il existe aussi des situations rares dans le cadre du phénomène funéraire européen:

1. L'enveloppement des enfants dans un linceul de la peau de l'animal chassé ou en divers tissus (Lagar Velho et Kostenki 12, niv. I), ce qui nous induit l'idée d'une activité domestique, considérée comme non connue par les communautés humaines paléolithiques: la préparation d'éléments de vêtement; de la sorte on certifiera l'idée qu'à la base de toute création humaine a été le phénomène spirituel, religieux, laïque ou funéraire. S'il ne s'agit pas de phénomènes naturels (la destruction de pièces de vêtement des adultes), nous constatons aussi de ce point de vue l'attention spéciale accordée aux enfants, et l'explication peut se référer aux *rituels de l'initiation*, dans le sens qu'aux plus jeunes, qui n'ont pas eu la possibilité de passer par ces cérémonies, on l'accorde une attention à part.

⁴⁵ Gambassini, Boscato, Moroni, Ronchitelli 2013: 101-104.

⁴⁶ Chirica V.-C., Chirica V. 2012: 1-19; Chirica V.-C., Bodi, Chirica V. 2012; Chirica V.-C., Bodi, Chirica V. 2010, etc.

⁴⁷ Chirica V., Chirica V.-C., Bodi 2015: 149.

⁴⁸ Morin 1970: 33.

2. Dans la même suite de cérémonies cultuelle se retrouve la déposition de grande dalles de pierre sur le corps inanimé des enfants, dont l'âge était très jeune (Vado all'Arancio), mais il y a eu aussi des adultes enterrés toujours avec des blocs en pierre, sur diverses parties anatomiques du corps ou à travers le corps entier (Grotte des Enfants 4, Barma Grande 5, Abri Tagliente etc.).

En deux situations on observe que cette attention a été accordée aux enfants non nés, à Nerja, en Espagne, et à Ostumi 1, en Italie (c'est là-bas qu'on a enterré la mère avec l'enfant non né). Nous ne croyons pas qu'il s'agisse seulement d'une attention particulière accordée à cette catégorie de décédés, mais plutôt de leur inclusion parmi les membres de la communauté, même avant la naissance. En ce cas, nous pouvons admettre l'existence de la famille ou au moins d'un certain degré de parenté, évidemment d'après la mère.

Nous avons aussi observé l'existence de possible cérémonies spéciales: dans la Grotte Continenza le squelette était déposé, mais décapité, au centre d'un cercle de pierre, évidemment de manière intentionnelle, parce que la tête n'a pas été trouvée dans le contexte de la sépulture; à Cueva Morin I et III on a procédé à l'amputation de parties anatomiques du corps du mort, sans pouvoir préciser le moment de l'intervention anthropique sur l'individu; il peut s'agir d'interventions «chirurgicales» (comme à Kostenki 8, niv. II, où l'on observé la possible pratique de la trépanation, par la coupe et la perforation du crâne); à Kostenki 2 on a observé la déposition du squelette en position verticale, dans une fosse spécialement fouillée, mais les membres supérieures du personnage manquaient, tout comme la tête, peut-être détruits par les carnassiers, mais il peut s'agir aussi de sacrifices humaines, comme éléments de responsabilité collective par rapport aux besoins de la communauté, ou par rapport aux diverses perturbations de l'environnement. A. Leroi-Gourhan⁴⁹ précise que «*Le cannibalisme rituel est indémontrable pour aucune époque du Paléolithique. Les documents suggèrent seulement que beaucoup d'hommes étaient laissés sans sépultures et dévorés, les uns par leurs semblables, les autres par les bêtes*».

En ce qui concerne la richesse et la variété des offrandes, la déposition de «ceintures» de centaines (Brno II) ou même milliers de coquilles perforées (Grotte des Enfants I et II) est frappante, tout comme celle de très nombreuses canines perforées, de renard ou de cerf, ce qui démontre un effort très grand de la part des membres de la communauté, comme résultat ou imposition de l'obligation des cérémonies cultuelles. Ces appréciations apportent de nouvelles preuves concernant l'existence des cérémonies, de l'intérieur des sanctuaires ou du cadre du

⁴⁹ Leroi-Gourhan 1990: 65.

phénomène funéraire pendant la période du Paléolithique Supérieur du territoire entier de l'Europe et du Moyen Orient.

Notre opinion est qu'à Sungir nous pouvons trouver l'explication de l'existence des procédures *d'initiation*, comme éléments des cérémonies *de passage*, parfois si dures, de sorte qu'il est possible que la mort des personnes soumises aux rituelles y intervint (tenant compte de la possibilité qu'il y eu plusieurs rituels ou un seul, mais complexe, à plusieurs étapes cérémoniales). Nous croyons que nous pouvons accepter comme fait réels les cérémonies *de passage*. «*L'initiation est une longue suite de cérémonies dont l'objet est l'introduction du **jeune homme** (s. ns.) dans la vie religieuse: celui-ci sort pour la première fois du monde profane dans lequel il a passé son enfance, pour pénétrer dans la sphère des choses sacrés. On dit qu'à ce moment **le jeune homme** mort, que l'être antérieur cesse d'exister et qu'une autre s'y substitue instantanément. Il renaît dans une nouvelle forme*»⁵⁰. Mais à Sungir une jeune fille est morte aussi, non seulement le jeune homme. De la sorte, nous pouvons accepter l'idée qu'aux cérémonies de la purification, du passage par les étapes de l'initiation, a participé aussi un personnage féminin, dont la présence est, d'habitude, interdite parmi les jeunes. «*Il existe aussi des initiations féminines*», nous dit M. Eliade⁵¹, donc nous n'excluons pas la possibilité que la fille de Sungir fût la victime des rituels qui auraient pu être même plus dures car une fois admise parmi les femmes, elle a accès complet et illimité à la sacralité, y compris la sacralité de la procréation et de la naissance.

De la sorte, l'*initiation*, comme la mort, comme l'extase mystique, équivaut à un passage d'une manière à l'autre et réalise une vraie mutation ontologique⁵². Les rites et rituels de l'initiation ont toujours été multiples et variés, même s'ils se basaient sur une idéologie commune des populations qui les pratiquaient⁵³. Nous n'analysons et nous ne détaillons pas l'entier cortège des canons, y compris les souffrances physiques auxquelles sont soumises les personnes désireuses (et obligées) à entrer, à droits complets, dans la communauté. Comme nous l'avons déjà précisé⁵⁴, il existe souvent des mutilations réelles, impliquant l'arrachement des dents, l'amputation des doigts, la déformation des mains, ces dernières étant imprimées sur les parois des grottes - sanctuaires, parce que toutes ces situations sont chargées du symbolisme de la mort⁵⁵, l'entier cérémonial étant mis sous le signe du sacré, pour la renaissance mystique, mais passant aussi par des phases de la mort; un nouvel homme est né, préparé pour la vie laïque, profane, mais aussi sacré. Donc, dans le

⁵⁰ Durkheim 1995: 47.

⁵¹ Eliade 1992: 79.

⁵² Eliade 1992: 167.

⁵³ van Gennep 1996: 146-165; Maureille, 2004.

⁵⁴ Chirica V. 2006; Chirica V.-C, Bodi, Chirica V. 2012.

déroulement de l'entier ensemble du phénomène de l'*initiation*, la mort physique de l'initié peut se produire, suite à laquelle, croyons nous, toute la communauté, participante au déroulement du *passage*, assume les conséquences, et nous voyons l'enterrement avec son faste possible, avec une grande et variée richesse d'offrandes et de cérémonies. C'est de cette manière qu'il est possible d'expliquer l'inégalable richesse et variété des offrandes avec lesquelles les morts de Sungir ont été enterrés. Mais, parce que les deux enfants/ jeunes hommes se trouvant sur le seuil de la puberté n'ont pas pu passer le seuil entre la vie et la mort physique, devenant des sacrifiés des croyances de la communauté, celle-ci les a enterrés avec la croyance de la résurrection; la preuve est constituée par la quantité d'ocre rouge, déposée sur le corps (ou les vêtements) de l'adulte, mais aussi le fémur humain, vidé du contenu naturel et rempli d'ocre rouge, dans le périmètre de la sépulture du garçon, déposé sous le corps de celui-ci⁵⁶.

La représentation plastique de la main constitue, dans le cadre de notre démarche, un autre thème important dans l'art et les religions préhistoriques européens. Elle est représentée dans la quasi-totalité des grottes - sanctuaires du Paléolithique Supérieur européen, et aussi dans d'autres créations de la fin des temps glaciaires d'autres continents⁵⁷. Nous sommes convaincus que ces représentations, si nombreuses et si diversifiées, étaient *sacralisées* dans le cadre de cérémonies spécifiques, car autrement la variété et le nombre des représentations ne pourraient être expliqués. En diverses études, nous avons considéré la représentation de la main comme application spirituelle de grande signification dans le cadre du phénomène de la spiritualité du Paléolithique Supérieur européen⁵⁸.

Dans la *Grande Grotte* d'Arcy-sur-Cure on a identifié de nombreux éléments par lesquels on a complété le «tableau» artistique des peintres aurignaciens: éléments anthropomorphes, représentés par des doigts groupés, sept empreintes de mains en négatif, à doigts complets, d'adulte et d'enfant; une autre main a les doigts incomplets, une main en positif, une représentation vulvaire et trois autres éléments anthropomorphes, parmi lesquels une silhouette féminine, à la réalisation de laquelle on a utilisé le relief calcaireux, consolidé d'ocre rouge, par lequel on lui a donné les formes généreuses des statuettes de type *Venus*. La Grotte Gargas (France) est célèbre par la représentation des mains en plus de 250 images peintes, des très nombreuses (143) gravures d'animaux, mais aussi des riches restes paléontologiques. La présence des mains peintes qui n'accompagnent pas d'autres figures achevées dans la même manière artistique est très importante; on a identifié 103 images de la main

⁵⁵ Eliade 1992: 76.

⁵⁶ Chirica V., Chirica V.-C., Bodi 2015: 214-216.

⁵⁷ Clottes 2006: 18-19.

⁵⁸ Chirica V. 2006: 25-26; Chirica V., Chirica V.-C., Bodi 2015: 162-163.

gauche, dont 72 noires, 28 rouges, 2 blanches, une à ocre, et 36 de la main droite: 13 noires, 23 rouges, y compris des empreintes en terre glaise; on remarque aussi les 10 mains entières, non-mutilées, mais aussi d'autres dont certains doigts ou seulement à certaines phalanges; certaines mains, surtout d'enfants, n'ont été qu'esquissées. En base des nombreuses représentations de mains, on a même dénommé les deux *Sanctuaires* de celle-ci, c'est pourquoi nous observons l'importance de la représentation de la main en autant de variantes et de motifs artistiques, y compris à déformations, possiblement congénitales ou mutilées suite à des accidents causés par la chasse ou par des animaux féroces, mais nous n'excluons pas la mutilation de la main dans le cadre des rituels de *passage*, d'initiation, comme cérémonies spéciales, lorsque les jeunes hommes, peut-être les jeunes femmes aussi, devaient supporter des procédures qui les périlclitaient même la vie⁵⁹ et nous constatons que la représentation de la main avait un rôle très important dans la création artistique sacré du Paléolithique Supérieur. Nous considérons que tout aussi importante peut être l'association, dans la peinture, de la représentation du cheval et de la main, celle-ci étant répétée dans beaucoup de zones de la grotte de Paglicci, d'Italie⁶⁰, Grotte Le Fuente de Salin, Grotte Pech Merle (Fig. 8), mais aussi dans de nombreux autres sanctuaires paléolithiques de France, évidemment par des cérémonies spéciales.

Nous voyons dans la représentation de la main des éléments importants de facture religieuse: la Main qui *crée*, lorsque son image est entourée de créations artistiques, sur les parois des grottes - sanctuaires; la main qui *protège*, lorsqu'elle est située en connexion avec les herbivores non-féroces (Paglicci, Pech-Merle); la main qui peut *maîtriser* les animaux nuisibles (Chauvet, Arcy-sur-Cure); la main qui se *sacrifie*, peut-être pendant la chasse; la main à *pouvoirs supérieurs*, rendue à déformations pathologiques, à doigts mutilés ou absents (Arcy-sur-Cure, Gargas). Les si nombreuses représentations, à Chauvet (plus de 500 *signes*), Gargas (plus de 250, mais seulement 10 entières), nous transmettent le message religieux de ces communautés humaines. La main qui crée peut aussi être représentée par le fait qu'en plusieurs grottes les créations artistiques ont été faites à la main (au doigt) dans la terre glaise molle des parois, ou sur les pierres de gué, celles-ci étant protégées, non-détruites dans le cadre de cérémonies cultuelles.

Nous acceptons l'idée de la religiosité de la création artistique, de l'art préhistorique, et nous n'omettons pas le caractère social des manifestations. «Elles ont été nées dans et de la religion, sont le produit de la pensée religieuse»⁶¹. Il est vrai que presque tous les théoriciens de l'idée liée à la religiosité de la création artistique dans la Préhistoire se basent sur des faits des religions historiques,

⁵⁹ Eliade 1992: 176.

⁶⁰ Palma di Cesnola 1988.

⁶¹ Durkheim 1995: 22.

et de notre point de vue il est peut-être dépourvu d'historicité à accepter toutes leurs assertions comme ayant une valeur obligatoire quand nous discutons de l'art préhistorique et de ses valences religieuses. Pourtant, en l'absence de certaines informations acceptables dans le sens historique, il est possible que nous devions prendre en considération des faits du domaine de la paléoethnologie et d'essayer de les transposer dans la vie des communautés préhistoriques. A commencer par le galet de jaspe de Makapangsgat, mais à certitude pendant le Paléolithique Supérieur, les gens ont été capables d'accorder une attention particulière, dans le sens de l'adoration, de certains objets que nous avons considérés pleins de sacralité, de véritables *hiérophanies* dans le sens attribué par M. Eliade⁶². L'explication peut être simple dans le sens où l'homme préhistorique, une fois atteint ou pénétré par la sacralité, avait la tendance permanente de mener sa vie tout près ou même dans l'intimité des objets sacralisés. Nous pourrions même admettre que même l'emplacement des campements, déterminé par les conditions d'environnement (et aussi par certaines *entités* idéologiques) pourrait signifier la consécration spirituelle de l'endroit. Dans la même direction, nous considérons que même l'aménagement de l'habitation était toujours chargée de sacralité par des rites, rituels et cérémonies à dépositions votives, spécifiques, et l'explication peut consister dans le fait que dans chaque habitation cucuténienne (Enéolithique de Roumanie) nous trouvons des statuettes féminines, d'autres objets sacralisés, ou qui démontrent l'existence du sacré, car l'homme, depuis la Préhistoire même, était pénétré de la nécessité de se situer dans le *périmètre* du temps et de l'espace sacré, des manifestations de sacralité. De la sorte, dans les cérémonies, devenues des fêtes religieuses, l'homme préhistorique pouvait trouver sa dimension sacrée de la vie sur terre, comme élément de la sacralisation de sa propre existence, se considérant lui-même création de l'*inconnu divin* de la procréation, telle que cette manifestation idéologique se retrouve sur la plaque de Laussel. Donc, le sacré se manifeste par des symboles et des *signes* qui démontrent la nature de la religiosité des communautés humaines et les éléments idéologiques mêmes de cette religiosité. Nous concluons cette tentative d'étude avec cette extraordinaire création artistique, à profondes significations culturelles, de la grotte Chauvet, qui suppose l'existence de cérémonies spécifiques, consacrées au couple divin femme-taureau (Fig. 11), car les communautés humaines du Paléolithique supérieur, surtout les initiés, les créateurs de l'art paléolithique, maîtrisaient un système complexe de pensée et de culture (religion)⁶³. Malheureusement nos carences concernant la possibilité (limitée) d'interprétation des faits, des découvertes archéologiques, nous crée des suspicions concernant l'existence des manifestations et

⁶² Eliade 1992: 22-30

⁶³ Cohen 2003: 83, 89

des cérémonies cultuelles, ou même la tendance d'ignorer leur caractère cérémonial, sacré, d'expérience spirituelle au niveau chronologique du Paléolithique Supérieur européen.

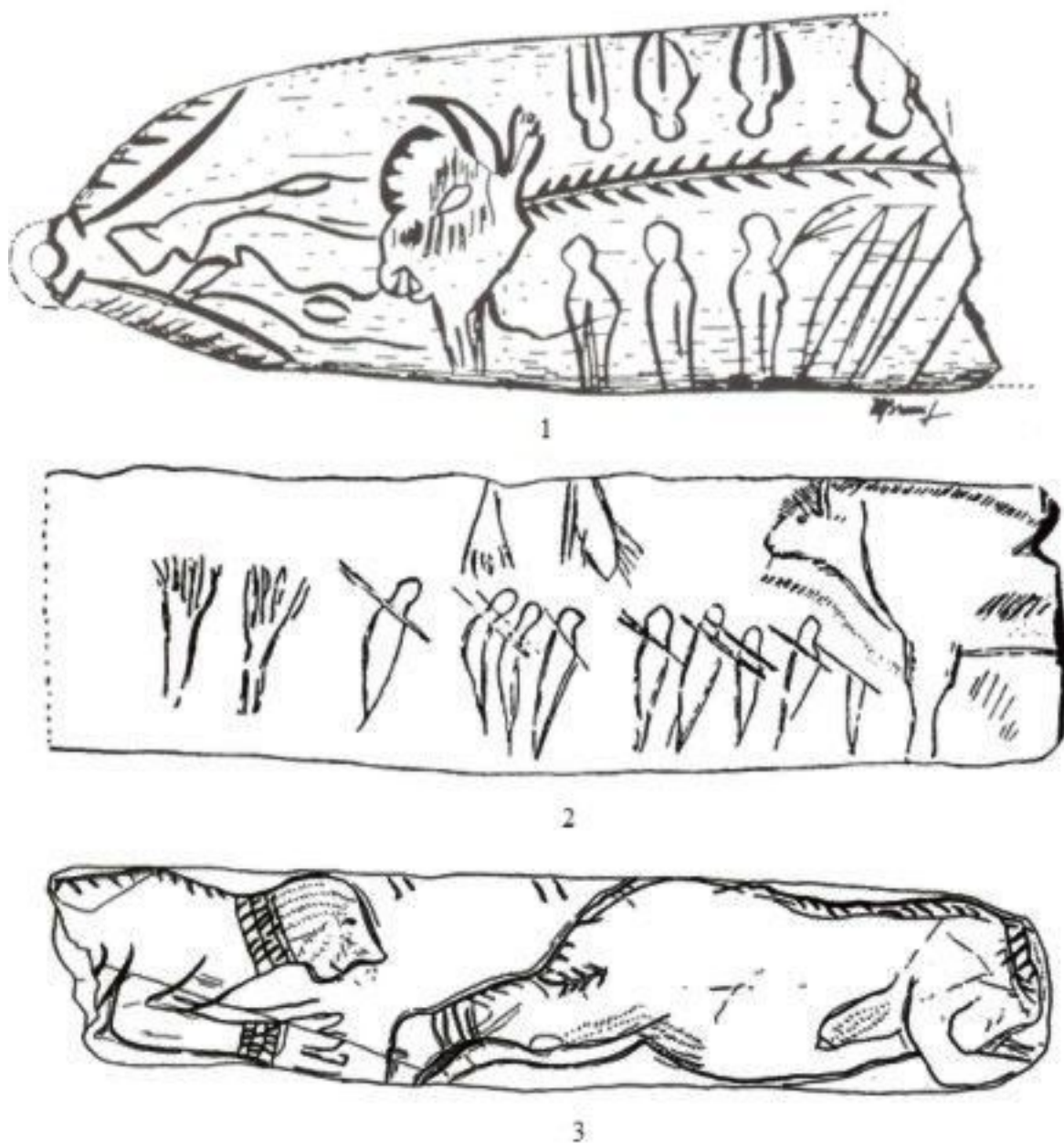


Fig. 1. 1, Lame d'os, de Raymonden, simulant un cortège (d'après F. Defrance, 2004); 2, fragment de côte, de Château des Eyzies, simulant une procession; 3, femmes considérées comme orantes (d'après F. Defrance, 2004).



Fig. 2. Le chasseur de Grotte Fumane (d'après A. Broglio, G. Dalmeri (a cura di), 2005).

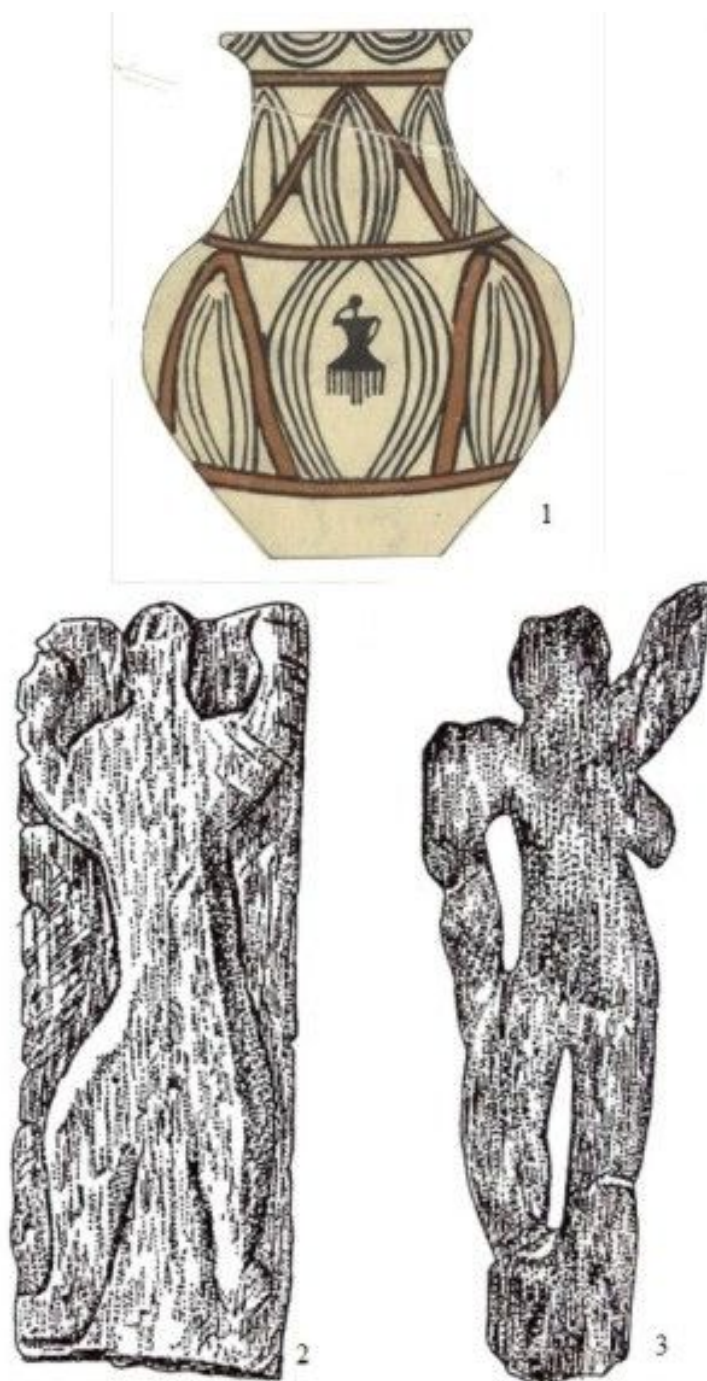


Fig. 3. 1, La Divinité féminine, représentée comme danseuse, ans l'art énéolithique. Cârnicieni (d'après V. Chirica, M. Tanasachi, 1985); 2, 3, les Grandes Déesses comme danseuses dans l'art paléolithique. Galgenberg (d'après Ch. Neugebauer-Maresch, 1995); 2, Gonnersdorf, d'après G. Bosinski, 1990.

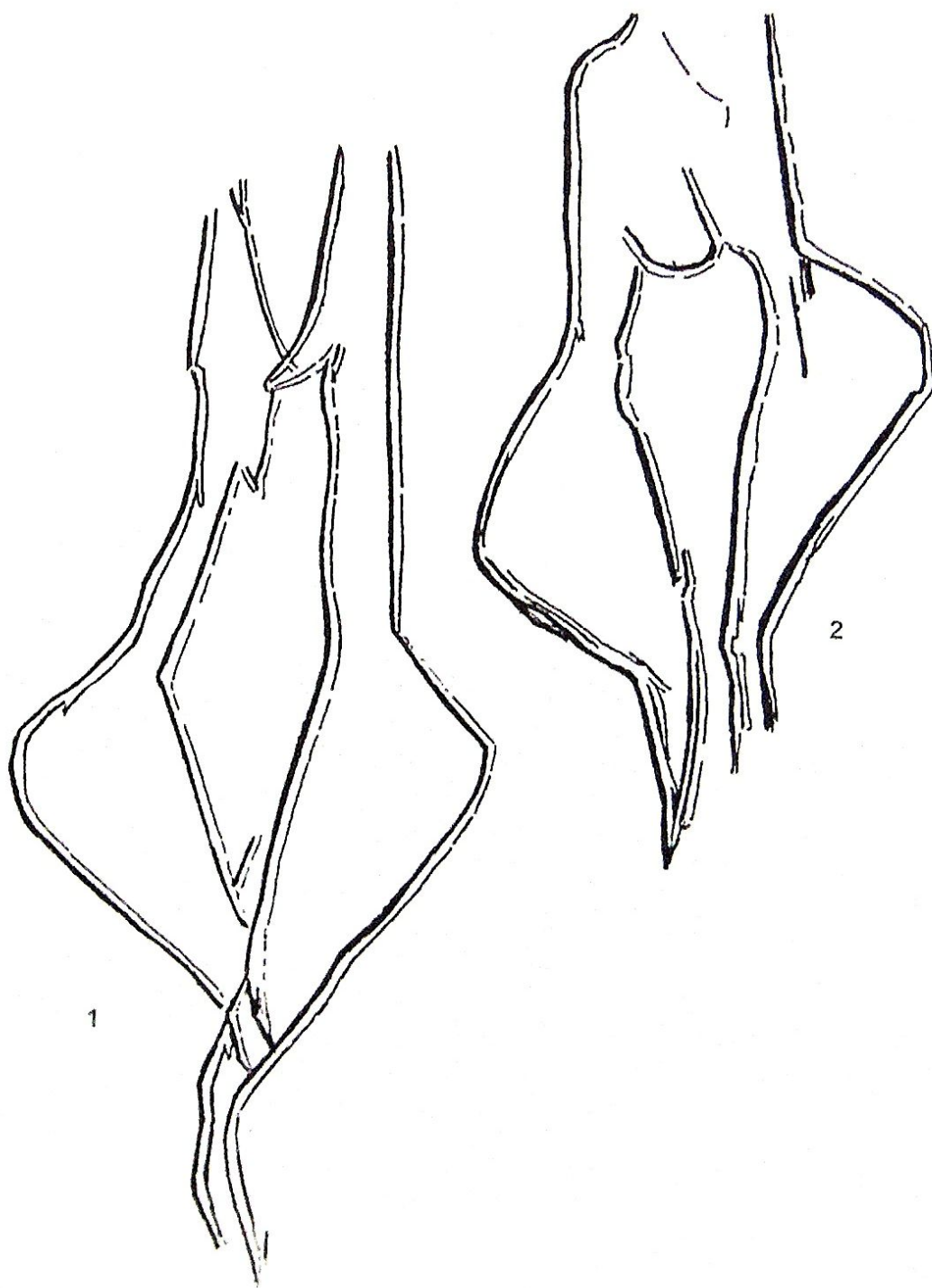


Fig. 4. Représentations de la divinité féminine (danseuses ?). Gonnersdorf (d'après G. Bosinski, 1990).

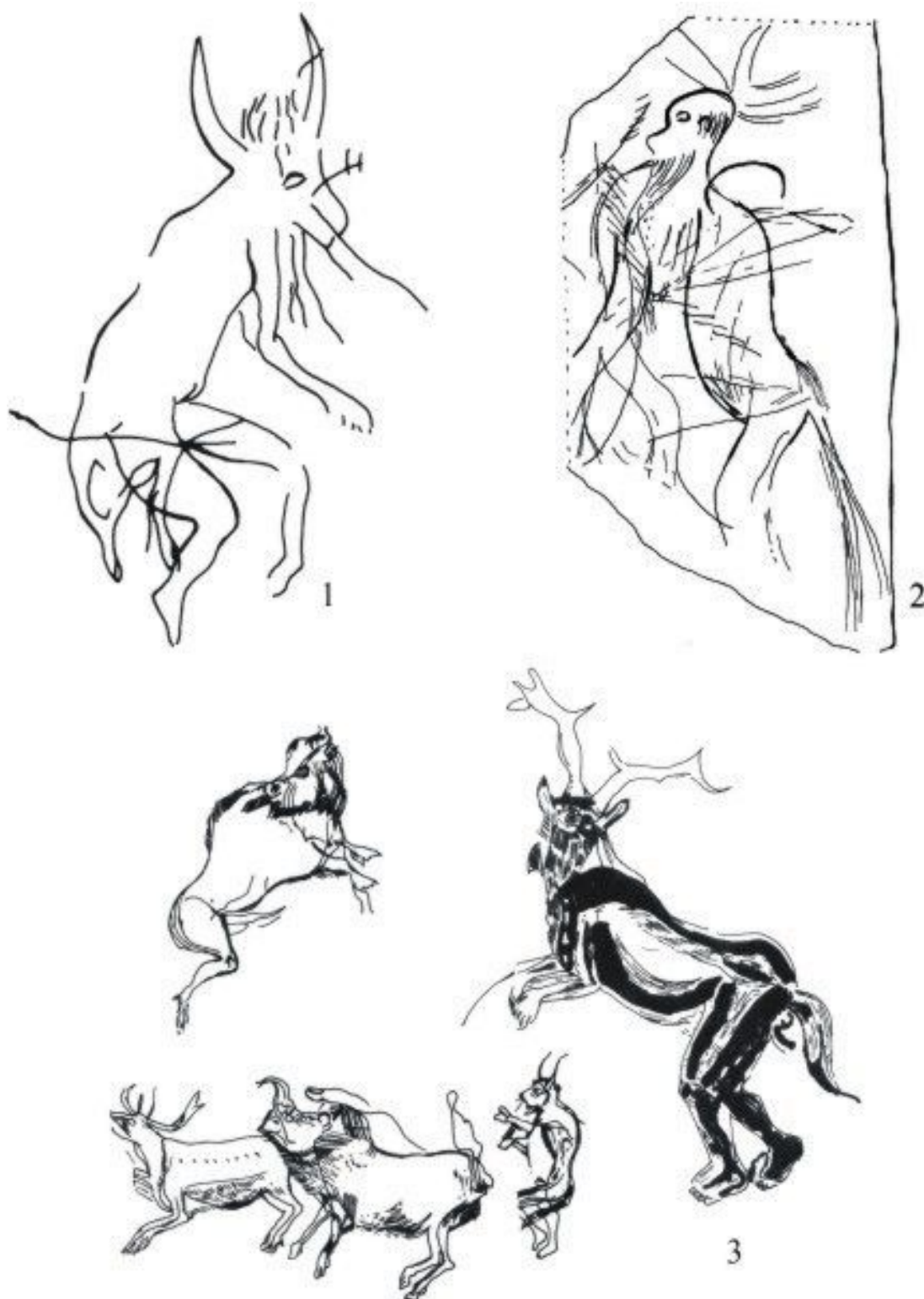


Fig. 5. Les grands sourciers de grottes de France (Grabillou (1), Lourdes (2), Trois Frères (3); Magdalénien (d'après V. Chirica, 2006).

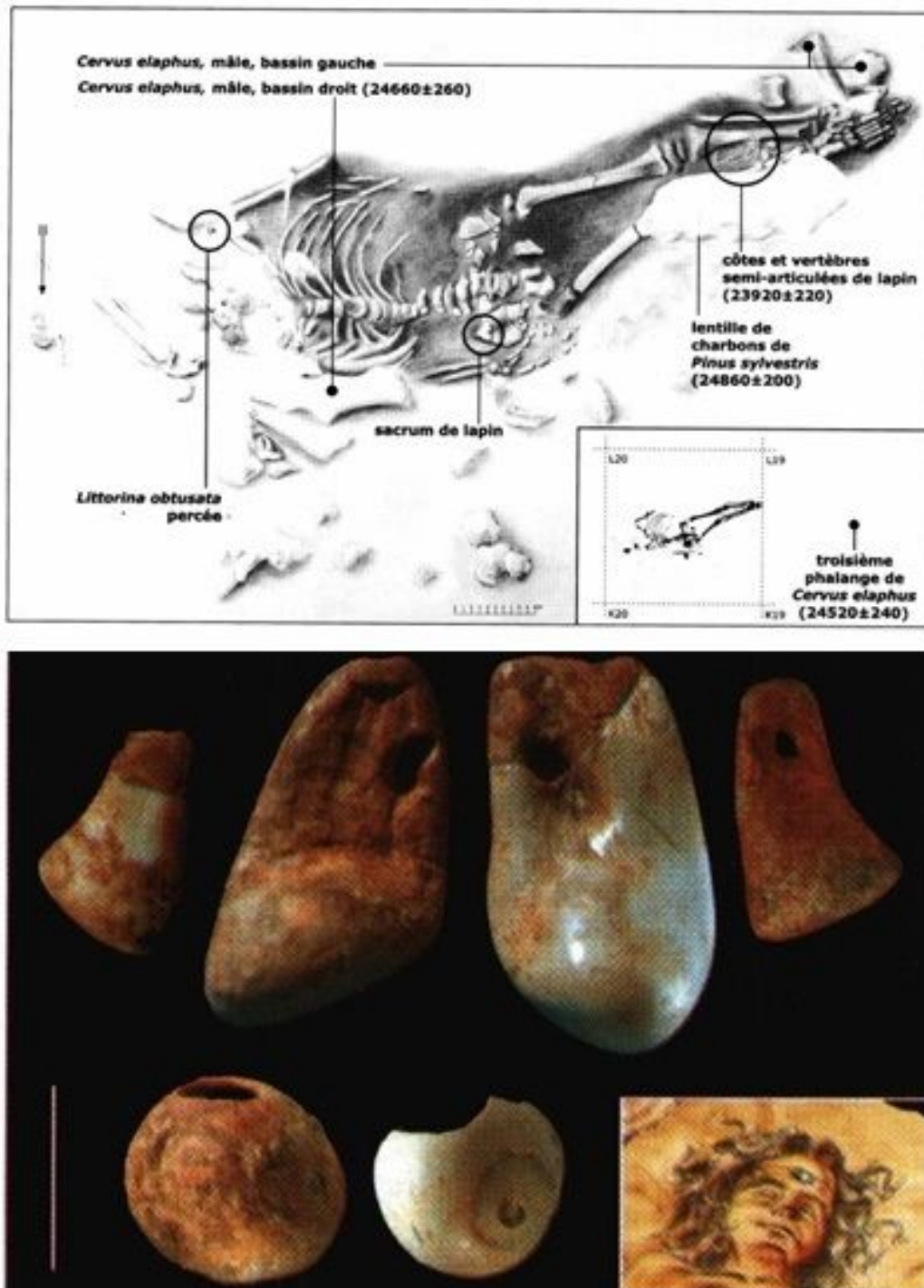
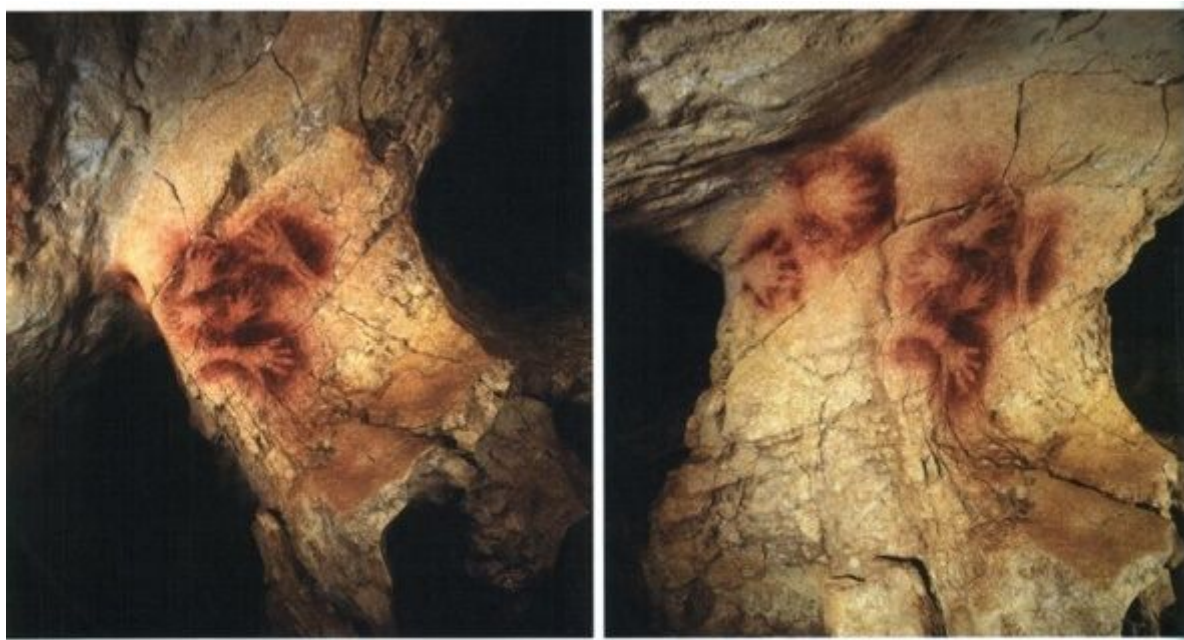


Fig. 6. *L'enfant de Lagar Velho* (d'après J. Zilhão, & E. Trinkaus, 2002).



Fig. 7. Le tombe triple de Sungir (d'après J. K. Kozłowski, 1992).

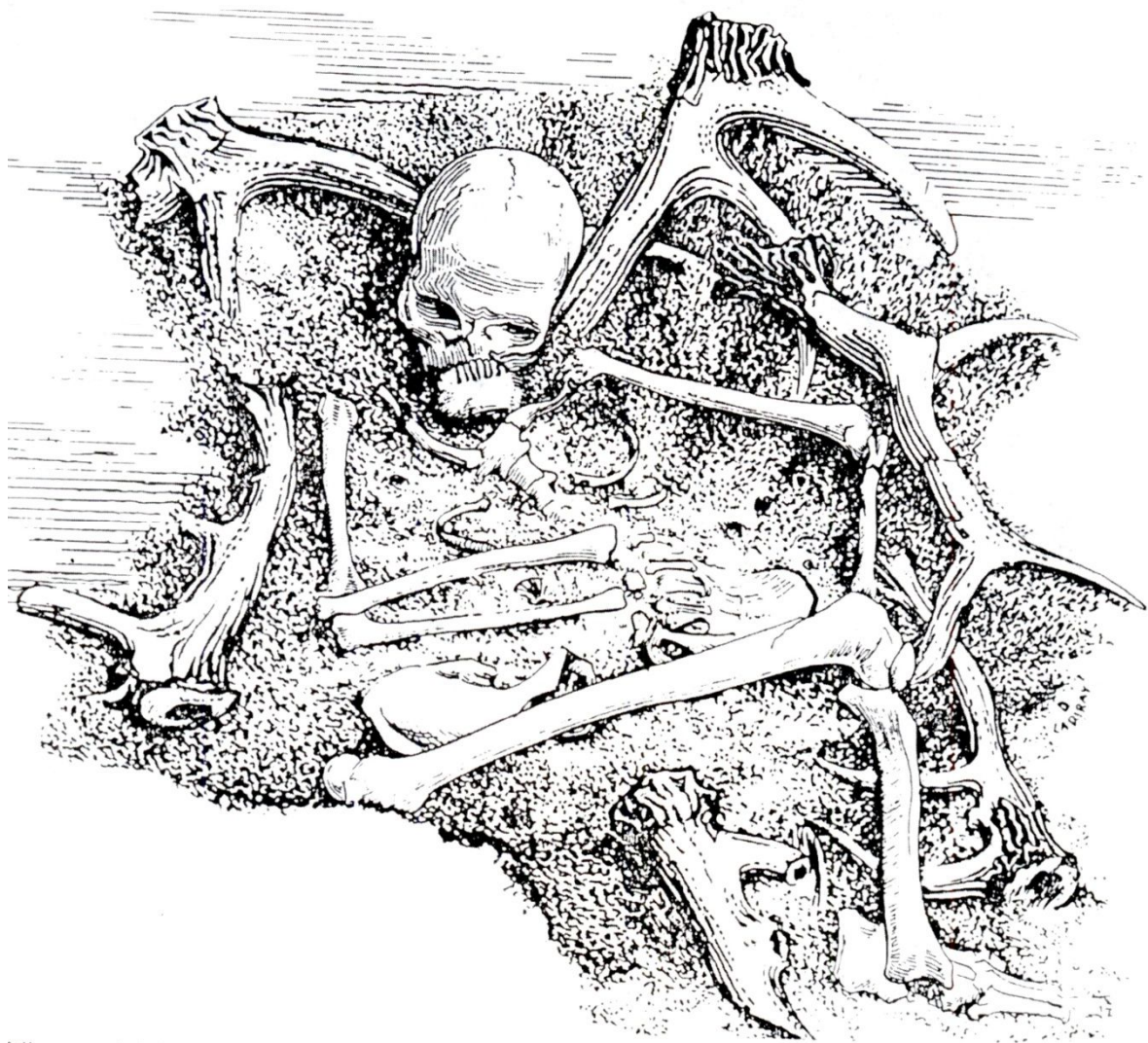


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Fig. 8. /1-2. Représentation de la main. 1, Grotte Le Fuente de Salin; 2, Grotte Pech Merle (d'après V. Chirica, C.-V. Chirica, G. Bodi, 2015).



*Fig. 9. L'accompagnement de bois de cerf et ocre rouge. Hoëdic (Bretagne), d'après
M. Otte, 1999.*

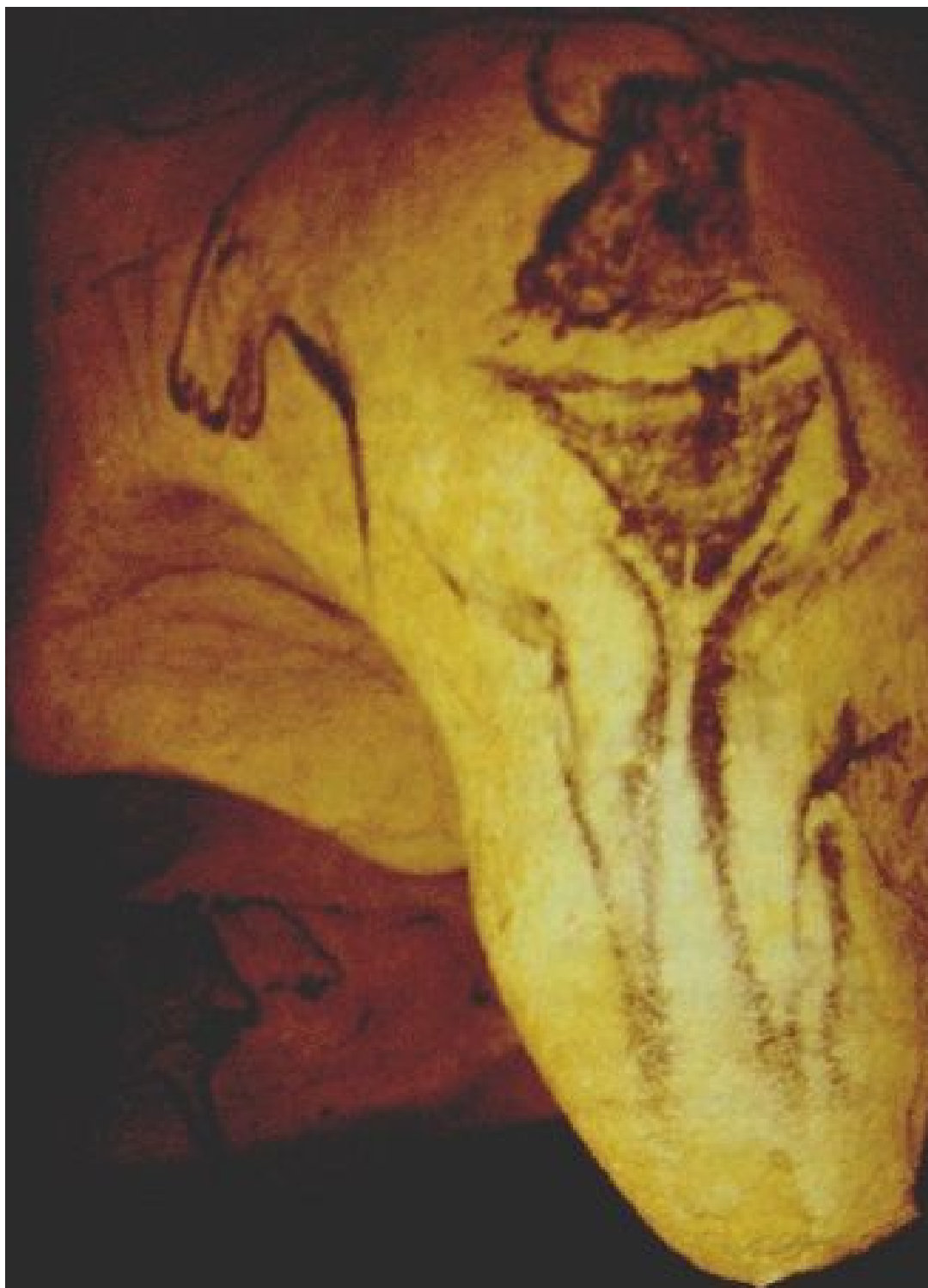


Fig. 11. La Grotte Chauvet. L'impressionnante création artistique, à profondes significations cultiques (d'après V. Chirica, V.-C. Chirica, G. Bodi, 2015).

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BIRD REPRESENTATIONS IN CENTRAL EUROPEAN PREHISTORY

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Key words: *Central european prehistory, Paleolithic, bird representations in Paleolithic, bird beliefs in Prehistory*

Abstract: *In most ancient religious and magical-artistic practices man has depicted the animal world, with representations of animals, birds, fish, reptiles or insects. The profound meaning of these representations sometimes remains unknown, but they can be used to give us an idea of the inner world, or mental vision of prehistoric man.*

Among these animals, some are real, some imaginary, and some are still with us today in the cultural baggage inherited in legends and folklore, folk songs, traditions, superstitions, tales, carols, customs and ceremonies such as weddings and funerals.

For the Upper Paleolithic of the Central European cultural and religious space are reported representations of birds in the form of statues and engravings and cut and notched bird bones, whose presence is continuous from the Aurignacian to the Magdalenian periods.

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In the Upper Paleolithic we can witness a development in the organization of human societies and their relationships to artistic creations and religious beliefs which generally assists the understanding of spiritualization in human evolution.

A cultural and spiritual evolution is indicated by art in the form of engravings on bone or ivory, sculptures in stone, bone or ivory, -and caves paintings or engravings, alongside the diverse use of red ochre in paintings, in funeral rituals and the filling with red ochre of bird bones with functional or/and ritual purposes.

We can find human representations birds and animals executed with a profound realism. Thus, many images or engravings of birds or animals are represented realistically, without stylization or schematization. These look like living creatures painted or engraved by artists in their natural attitudes, detached from living nature, and indicate an observational spirit combined with gifted artistic skills.

In general, we can assert that prehistoric art has its origin in religion, with its appearance stimulated by magic rites. Sculptures and engravings in which we can identify symbols of fecundity can be found from the Aurignacian period onwards. Magic is also present, but the images and engravings do not always have a magical character. Sometimes the images have been painted without rules, and in some cases where the surface was full,

have been allowed to overlap the previous work. In the time of the Upper Paleolithic, the most authoritative way of transmitting knowledge- was images and shapes. As Mircea Eliade writes, „the man from archaic world tend to believe as much as possible in Sacred” .

The magical and ritual aspect of cave paintings is clear from their position in the least accessible parts of the cave and by the subject they treat. For example, the relationship between prey and the hunter, or the highly elaborate shamanic scenes with music, *dancing*, singing, and masked man, such as the famous „*Dancing Sorcerer*”¹.

For the Upper Paleolithic period we can witness many magical/religious beliefs: a belief in divinity; a belief in magic efficiency and implicitly in supernatural mysterious forces; a belief in souls belonging to the dead.

The cult of the dead is confirmed by deliberate burials, where the deceased is interred with grave goods and sometimes covered with red ochre, which is considered in some current primitive societies to provide sustenance for the soul, being the colour of blood and life, and shows us the desire for immortality and belief. Recent research regarding the use of red ochre in the Paleolithic, shows us the possibility of some „degree of symbolism” not only in art but also in funeral rites. Even so, it must be remembered that red ochre also had practical uses which persist today in some primitive societies, such as the Himba tribe, Orumbo, Namibia. Here, due to the lack of water, women wash their skin and hair with a mixture of clay and red ochre. If red ochre substitutes for water and the water coming from the earth is considered a living well, then the Holy Spirit itself is a spring of living water, and a ritual bath means a return to our origins. The Baptism has the meaning of a second birth and any cult flourished near to a well. Thus, it is possible that the red ochre used in burials for body painting may have the meaning of a „ritual washing”, a faith in evolution and resumption of the circle of life.

The marvels of Paleolithic art are thought to be due to a magic ideology, in which the prey can be mastered, caught and brought to submission by a representation of its image. The image and imagery are inseparable parts of a spiritual artistic manifestation, intermediate between community and divinity. Magical-religious practices were integrated in life during the Upper Paleolithic time and the religious attitude through images/art, represents one ways in which man could organize his mental world.

¹ Georgiade 1938, 45.

Art can be used to mark territories, to pass on knowledge to the younger generation and as a central point of ceremonies and rites. The making of an image was a fundamental rite during the time of the Upper Paleolithic. In other words, the religious expression was not only in the image itself but also the making of it. Natural forms were respected and man needed only to extract from rock, stone, bone or ivory the desired representations.

In the oldest magical-religious practices and also in the first artistic manifestations, man appears to have thought of the animal world through representations of animals, birds, fish, reptiles, insects, whose meaning is unknown.

In connection with the complexity of the phenomena of spiritual nature, many researchers say that in European folk beliefs and practices often linger pre-Christian elements, some of which are older than that of the classical Greco-Roman mythology divinities². These ancient forms of religious thought, says Ion Ionica and Maria Cuceu –can be found in popular customs³.

Some of these animals are still with us today in the cultural baggage inherited through legends and folklore, folk songs, traditions and superstitions, fairy tales, carols, or customs related to weddings and funerals.

Certain religious behaviors are specific to civilizations of prehistoric hunters and the killing of animals is a ritual. Bones, especially the skull having considerable -ritual worth (perhaps because they were believed to host the "soul" or "life") and offerings of skulls and long bones are present in primitive beliefs and ceremonies.

Bird bones with traces of engravings, or cut and notched are present since the Aurignacian period (at Geissenklösterle⁴ -a bird bone tube decorated with notches and two fragmented flutes (partially reconstructed later) made from bird bones⁵, one 37000 BP old; at Mamutowa -bird bones cropped and notched). The carving of bird bones was preserved and extended in a way more complex during the Gravettian period (Grub-Kranawetberg - bird bones filled with red ochre⁶ (Pl. 4-3) –a possible blowing instrument or used for storing, probably used in rituals; at Willendorf bird bones incised with transverse parallel lines⁷; at

² Cuceu M. 1996, 108.

³ Cuceu M. 1996, 108.

⁴ Hahn 1988.

⁵ Münzel, Seeberger, Hein 2002, 107-118.

⁶ Antl-Weiser 2008, 73.

⁷ Otte 1981.

Brillenhöhle a fragment from a bird bone with two transverse notches⁸; on Geissenklösterle a tube from a bone bird decorated with notches⁹; at Wildscheuer (Wild Scheuer) -a bird bone tube decorated with parallel lines and jagged¹⁰ (10.3 cm), (Pl. 4-2) and on Mamutowa -two bird bones cropped and notched¹¹. In the Magdalenian period, the activity was slightly different and on a smaller scale (hollow tubular bird bones found at Andernach and Petersfels)¹².

Musical instruments are important pieces in the evolution of human thinking, in the consolidation of social relations and in sharing emotion. But the musical instrument can also be viewed also as a transmitter of messages. Some African tribes transmit information using flutes, whilst the Caucasians use drums and the Native American- fires. The Inca *quippus*, strung with knots or the Scandinavian batons -equivalent to the Romanian “*răboj*”. The first, although disputed, musical instrument, belonged to Neanderthal man and is a bear bone with 4 holes (2 integers and 2 partial). It is dated at 45000 BP and was discovered at Divja Babe, Slovenia, in 1995, held presently by the National Museum Ljubljana, Slovenia.

Bird bones flutes can be found since the beginning of the Upper Paleolithic, from the Aurignacian, in sites as Geissenklösterle, Hohle Fels and Vogelherd and located along the Danube Corridor, an area which represents an access point and a key passage for the migration of populations towards and around Central Europe from 35000-40000 B.P.

At Geissenklösterle, the Aurignacian deposits of archaeological horizon II have yielded fragments from 3 different flutes, one carved in ivory, the other two made from bird bones¹³. One of the oldest flutes known is the three-holed bone flute discovered at Geissenklösterle, made from a swan's *radius*, probably a Whooper Swan (*Cygnus cygnus*) with a preserved length of 126.5 mm (Pl. 4-1). The flute was reconstructed from 23 small pieces and dated by the ¹⁴C-accelerator method (AMS) to ca. 33500 BP and by with Thermoluminescence (TL) to 37000 BP. The other bone flute discovered at the same site was also made from a swan's *radius* and was reconstructed from 7 small fragments. The ivory flute from the same site has been reconstructed from 31 fragments¹⁴.

⁸ Bolus 2010, 139-150; Otte 1981.

⁹ Otte 1981.

¹⁰ Otte 1981.

¹¹ Otte 1981, vol. II

¹² Álvarez-Fernández 2009, 49.

¹³ Münzel, Seeberger, Hein 2002, 107-118.

¹⁴ Münzel, Seeberger, Hein 2002, 107-118.

The Hohle Fels site provided new evidence regarding Paleolithic music with the discovery of 12 fragments comprising an almost complete flute carved from the *radius* of a griffon vulture (*Gyps fulvus*) and two small fragments which come from two different ivory flutes¹⁵. The Hohle Fels griffon vulture bone flute is the most complete musical instrument recovered from the caves of Swabia. This vulture species has a wing span (230-265 cm) providing radial bones of an optimal length for flutes. The Hohle Fels vulture flute has a length of 21.8 cm and a diameter of about 8 mm with five finger holes - two carved deeper and a V-shaped notch to one end¹⁶. There are four fine lines incised near hole. It is dated between 32000 and 36000 BP.

In 2005 three fragments of a bone flute and two fragments originating from two ivory flutes¹⁷ were recovered at Vogelherd.

Representations of birds in the form of statues, can be found from the Aurignacian period (e.g. ivory carved shaped bird from Hohle Fels) and continue into the Gravettian (e.g. representations of birds made from clay found in Dolni Vestonice) and also in the Magdalenian, where we see a diversification (e.g. at Andernach -representations of a bird carved on a piece of a reindeer bone and engravings representing different waders and birds of prey at Gönnersdorf).

We can observe an evolution of symbolic representations and drawings from the Aurignacian to the Magdalenian, with a higher level of richer and more complex schemes. Their significance is unknown but may represent an embryonic "language" addressed to a spirit (or protector totem) in which the image and the action in the image may hold powers and represent key points in primitive magic and religious ritual.

Through popular beliefs and rituals, some of the above images, symbols and folk deities have been preserved until today. Thus, among the *Genii* or *Spirits of wheat*, J. G. Frazer considered the bird and the hare¹⁸. By the same author *Găiuțul*, *Gai Rooster*, *Rooster Heaven* are mythological symbols which can be seen in form, shape, plumage and colors in modern-day carols¹⁹. The rooster became a herald through his morning song for the sleeping deities. *Găiuțul* or *Rooster Heaven* seems to have sacred attributions, for example to take "*water in his mouth / leaf in lip*" and bring fertility to field and crops- Frazer considered this

¹⁵ Conard, Malina & Münzel 2009, 1-4.

¹⁶ Conard, Malina & Münzel 2009, 1-4.

¹⁷ Conard, Malina & Münzel 2009, 1-4.

¹⁸ Frazer 1980; Cuceu M. 1996, 108.

¹⁹ Cuceu M. 1996, 130.

bird as an important zoomorphic deity in popular mythology. The bird appears in Romanian folklore materials as the *Yellow Bird*, *Roan bird* that walks "*Days on the river/Nights on fields*" from whence is urged to leave, being a fruitful field deity, a chthonian deity²⁰.

Gods from Romanian pantheon fit into the Carpathian spiritual civilization including, according to Ion Ghinoiu, the Neolithic bird goddess, Gaia, which represents the start of a family tree of several gods and Indo-European mythologies. By the same author, the Paleolithic legacy includes waders (cranes, geese, ducks) decorated with meanders and zigzags (pictures of water courses), parallel lines (falling rain), nets and checkerboards (showing springs, the water of life, amniotic fluid)²¹. The bird goddess has a beak or pointed nose, a long neck and female breasts. She brings rain, milk or fruits of the earth. A merged image with its egg is sometimes seen in the cosmogony of old Europe²². The image of a divine swan (*hamsa*) hatching the cosmic universal egg (*brahmanda*) is also present in India, and in some other cosmogonies representing primordial creation. For instance, the egg expelled from the mouth of the Egyptian Kneph or the Chinese dragon. In some Boeotian tombs (Beotia is a Greek region, situated between the Corint Bay and Euboea Bay, with Teba as ancient capital) eggs have been found placed in the hand of Dionysian images. The Easter egg is a symbol for Christ's resurrection.²³

In the hypostasis of death, the main substitutes of bird goddess are birds of prey: the eagle, owl, crow, hawk, and kite²⁴. Some as owl and little owl, through their song announcing the imminent arrival of death, other- kite, crow, eagle, carries the soul who left the body²⁵.

It is also represented in the nude with a large pubic triangle with arms crossed and face mask²⁶. The emphasis on the vulva and breasts not as a source of milk, suggests that the priority is no longer the nourishing aspect of an aquatic goddess, but rather the reintegration into a primordial womb²⁷. The kite was for ancient Greeks an oracular bird connected with the cult of Apollo and symbolizing the clairvoyance²⁸. The little owl (*Athene noctua*) is

²⁰ Cuceu M. 1996, 129.

²¹ Ghinoiu 1997, 52.

²² Ghinoiu 1997, 52.

²³ Ghinoiu 1997, 60-61.

²⁴ Ghinoiu 1997, 52.

²⁵ Ghinoiu 1997, 52.

²⁶ Ghinoiu 1997, 52.

²⁷ Ghinoiu 1997, 52, apud Gimbutas 1989, 83-89.

²⁸ Clébert 1995, 133.

Minerva and Athena's bird, the symbol of rational knowledge²⁹, opposite to the intuitive knowledge represented by the eagle. The eagle is also the bird which brings together the functions of light and fire and is the symbol for Zeus; the carrier of his lightning, fire, conflagration, devastation, but also representing the carriage of light. For the Nordic peoples of Europe and Asia who practice shamanism, the eagle is the vehicle that carries the shaman's soul through the travels of his ascensions and initiation³⁰. Therefore, death is revealed as a journey and a reintegration into the primordial through symbols and sightedness.

The belief that the soul can fly and has the shape of a bird appears in funeral folk customs. For example, a glass of water or a slice of bread, can be found in the mourning house, above the door or window and left for the bird-soul over a six week period of time, in the belief that the soul left the dead body after burial and flies among the extant loved ones during this period of time.

From the above, we can see that bird goddesses involve beliefs in both hypostasis of life (cycle of water birds) and hypostasis of death (cycle of birds of prey)³¹.

G. Bosinski identify engravings of bird representations at Gönnersdorf (Pl. 1, 2-3) as swans (*Cygnus cygnus*), summer goose (*Anser anser*), marsh hen (*Gallinula chloropus*), coot (*Rallidae*), woodcock (*Limosa limosa*) and other birds from the *Scolopacidae* family, such as crane (*Grus grus*), partridge (*Lagopus mutus*) plus other waders and a raven, in single images or compositions³².

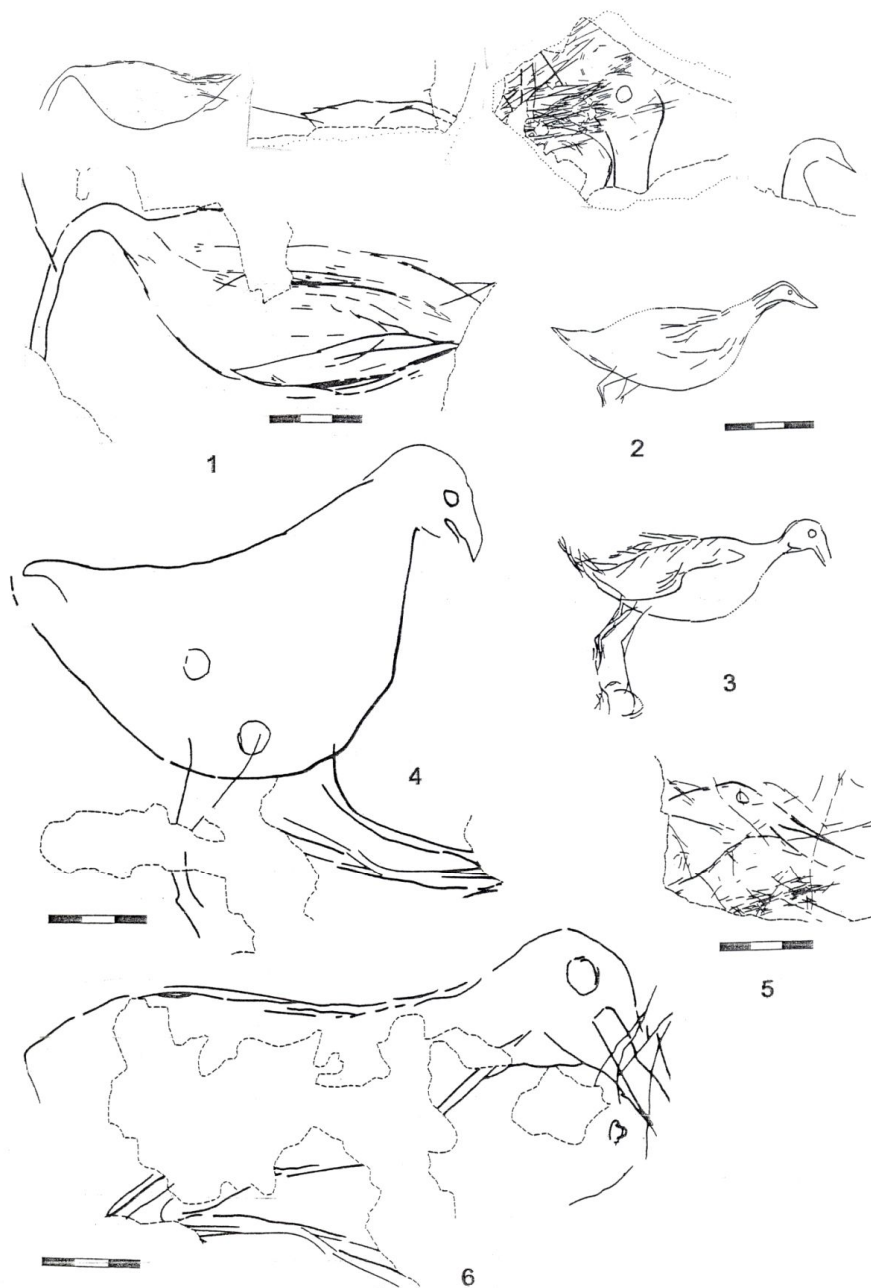
We can see that our perception of symbolic events is based on traditional concepts whose origin descends deep into the "dawn of civilization". Images of birds were present from Paleolithic times and appear to have been used for artistic-religious purposes through the depictions in engravings and –avimorphic sculpture and also through musical instruments made from bird bones (griffon vulture and swans).

²⁹ Clébert 1995, 95.

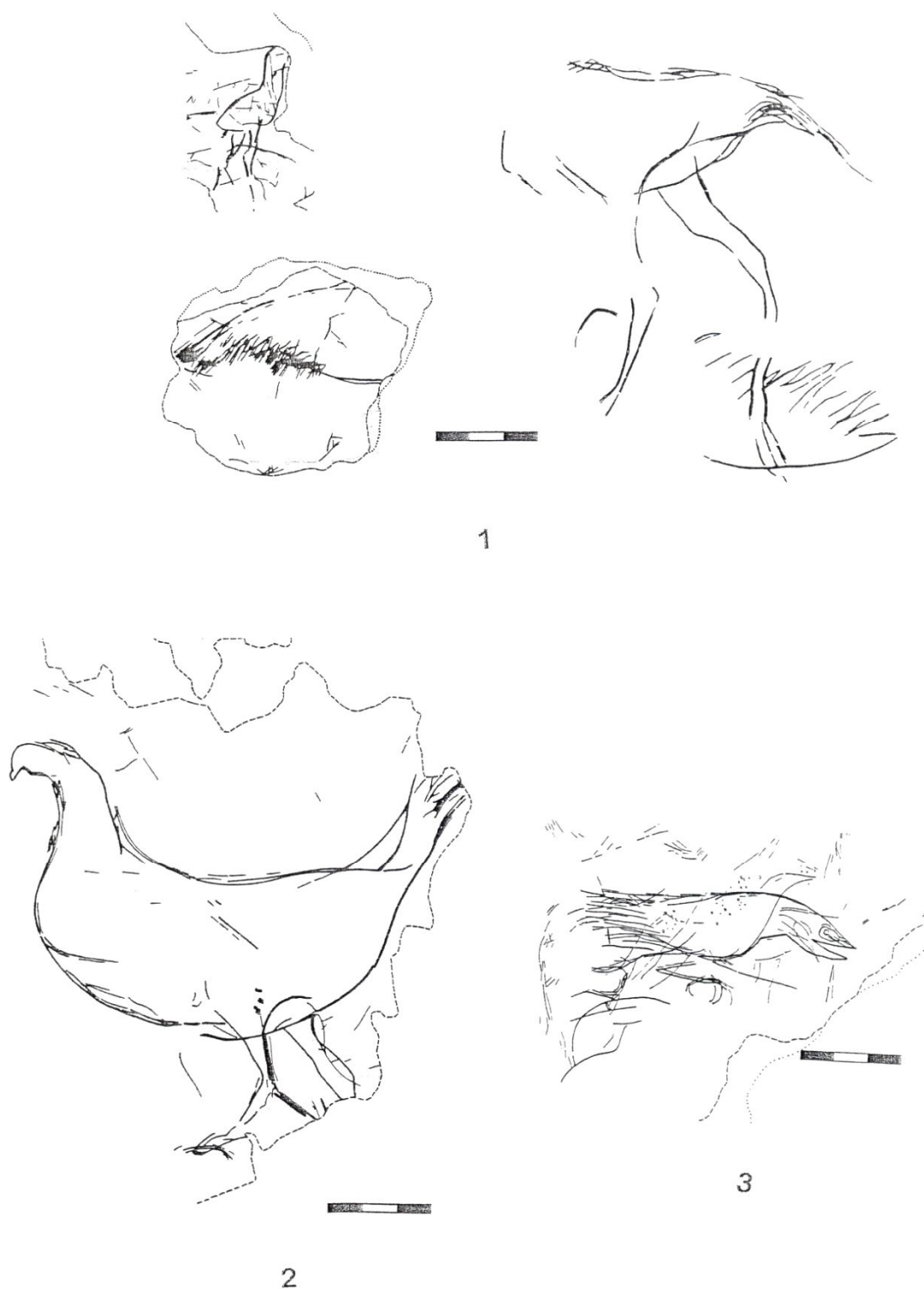
³⁰ Clébert 1995, 334-340.

³¹ Ghinoiu 1997, 54.

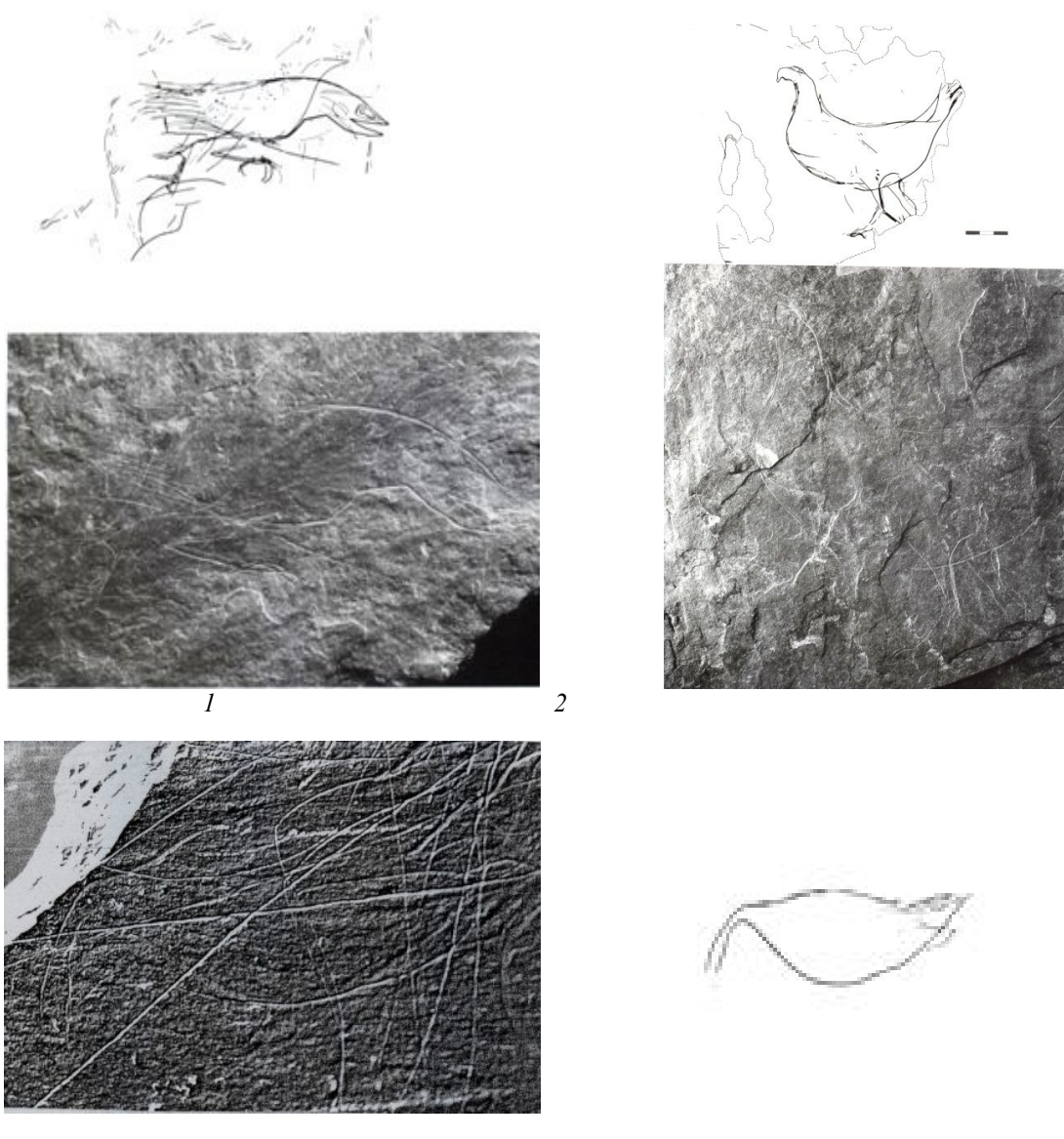
³² Bosinski 2008, 115-128.



Pl. 1. Engravings with birds representations at Gönnersdorf as: 1, swans (apud Bosinski 2008, 119, abb. 88: 69,7; 311; 162 B); 2, summer goose (*Anser anser*) (apud Bosinski 2008, 119; abb. 89: 277; 318, 2; 168 A,4); 3, marsh hen (*Gallinula chloropus*) (apud Bosinski, 2008, 120, abb. 90: 168 A,3); 4, coot (*Rallidae*) (apud Bosinski, 2008, 120, abb. 90: 271,1); 5, woodcock (*Limosa limosa*) (apud . Bosinski 2008, 121, abb. 91: 273); 6, bird from *Scolopacidae* family (apud Bosinski 2008, 121, abb. 91: 271, 2-3).

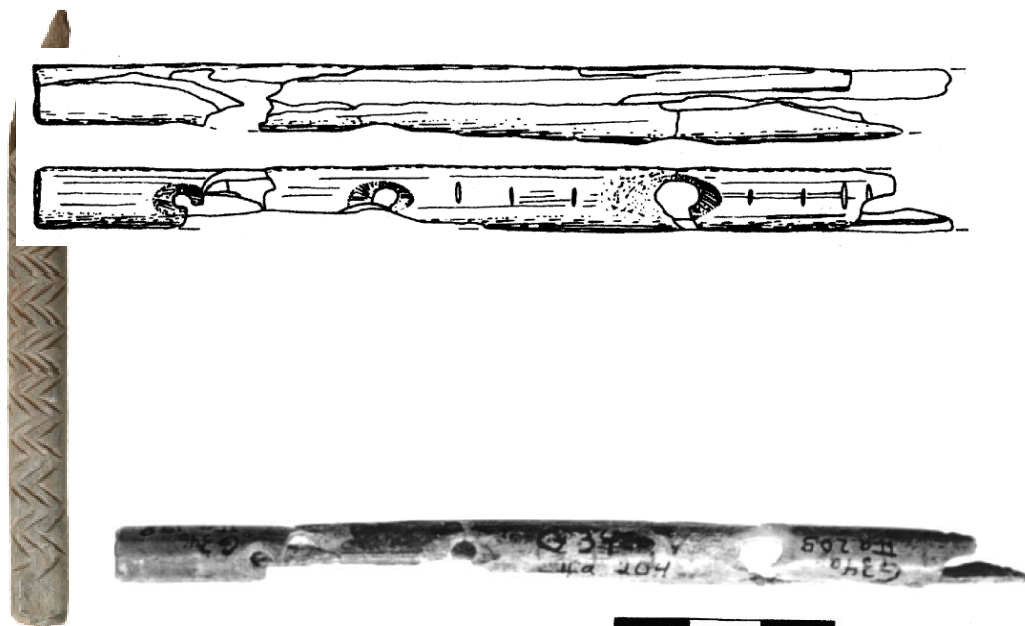


*Pl. 2. Engravings with birds representations found at Gönnersdorf, interpreted as: 1, crane (*Grus grus*) (apud Bosinski 2008, 122, abb. 92: 272; 274; 276); 2, partridge (*Lagopus mutus*) (apud Bosinski 2008, 123, abb. 93: 270A); 3, raven (apud Bosinski 2008, 123, abb. 94: 275A).*



3

Pl. 3. Engravings representing birds found at Gönnersdorf, interpreted as: 1, raven (apud Bosinski 2008, Taf. 139: 275A); 2, partridge (Lagopus mutus) (apud Bosinski 2008, Taf. 131: 270A) and 3-swann (Cygnus cygnus) (apud Bosinski 2008, Taf. 92: 69,7).



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Pl. 4. 1. Engraved bird bone found in Gravettian layer from WildScheur, dimension 10.3 cm (after <http://www.mobileslandschaftsmuseum.de/spuren/steeden.html>); 2, flute found at Geissenkloesterle-as drawn and picture before and after completed with wax, made from a swan's radius, probably a Whooper Swan, preserved length 126.5 mm, asymmetrical diameter of the flute is 10.3 X 9.1 mm (apud Münzel, Seeberger, Hein 2002, 114, fig. 5a); 3, tubular bone bird with internal traces of red ochre (apud Antl-Weiser 2008, 73, fig. 11).

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HUNTING SYMBOLS FROM THE SOMEȘ CLIFFS

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Key words: *Someș Plateau, Someș cliffs, parietal art/cave art, animal and human representations, symbols, signs, meanings*

Abstract: *The Someș Cliffs (Sălaj County) provide a majestic sculptural landscape beginning from the Rus area until the tourist park Grădina Zmeilor. Some of the rocks show animal and anthropomorphic representations, as well as signs and symbols, which span over a long period of time (Paleolithic to Middle Ages to modern times). This article intends to discuss and interpret some of the most significant showcases. The mentioned discoveries draw our attention to new parietal art achievements, which complete those already known in Romania.*

The most important paleolithic discovery in the area was, until recently, the cave in the Cuciulat quarry, identified in 1962 when miner Costan Indreacan from Cuciulat entered in and walked 150 meters of its length. Afterwards, the cave was mapped and it turned out to have a length of 450 m.

In the area of the Someș Plateau, over 34 caves and grottoes are counted, all in the northern part of the Someș river basin (fig. 1)¹. Unfortunately, they have not yet also been researched by archeologists, only by speologists. The Cuciulat quarry cave was rediscovered on 28.07.1978 by the speleologists from the Emil Racoviță Speology Club from Bucharest. On this occasion, Mihai Codescu noticed the now-famous rock paintings on the ceiling of a small room, later researched and published with analogies by Marin Cărciumaru and Maria Bitiri (1979). These researchers attributed the paintings to the latter part of the Upper Paleolithic (cca. 10.000 B.C.)

¹ Istvan et alii 2011, 1-3; Bitiri, Cărciumaru 1979; 1980; Cărciumaru, Bitiri 1980; Cărciumaru, Brijan 1988; Păunescu 2001, 449.

The closest paleolithic site is Perii Vadului – Cariera Veche or *Pe Stâncă* (Ilieanda village, Sălaj county, cca. 8 km from the closest rock engravings²). The earliest materials from here belong to the late Mousterian (level I), and the next level (II) is Gravettian.



Fig. 1. Caves and grottoes in the Someș Plateau.

Paleolithic discoveries in the mid-basin of the Someș river were signaled at Bucium (by the teams which researched the Roman fortress), on the Angriji valley, which comes down through Romita to Jibou and on to Someș. These consisted of two-sided tips, a scraper attributed to the Aurignacian and others³. Other paleolithic discoveries were found at Chendrea⁴, those already mentioned at the Perii Vadului (possibly including materials from the early Neolithic⁵) and around Izvoarele Someșului. Marin Cărciumaru⁶ signalled rock paintings at Ileanda. Later, Radu Pop and Mihai Ghemiș noted several sites with engravings and rock art at

² Păunescu 2001, 451 ff, apud Bitiri, Cărciumaru 1980.

³ Jungbert 1977, 1-3; 1978; 1979; Păunescu 2001, 448-456; Luca, Gudea 2010, 100, cat. 229a; a prehistoric settlement was discovered between Rus and Buzuș, near the old Someș river bed, by the old road, next to the cave entrance. Bibliography: Roska 1942, 51, no. 239; Lakó 1981, 48; Luca, Gudea 2010, 34, cat. 41; Kacsó 2011, vol. I, 599.

⁴ Păunescu 2001, 449.

⁵ Păunescu 2001, 449 sqq.

⁶ Bitiri, Cărciumaru 1979; 1980; Cărciumaru, Bitiri 1980; Păunescu 2001, 450-455.

the middle-Someş cliffs, dating starting in the Paleolithic (fig. 2). These have been partially documented with high quality images⁷.

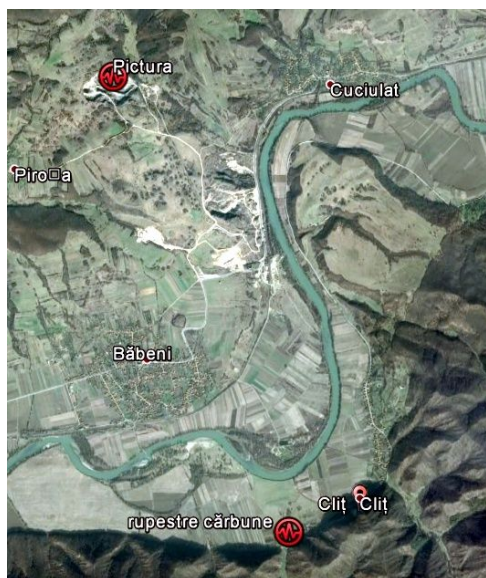


Fig. 2a. The area of the Cuciulat – Cliț cliffs.

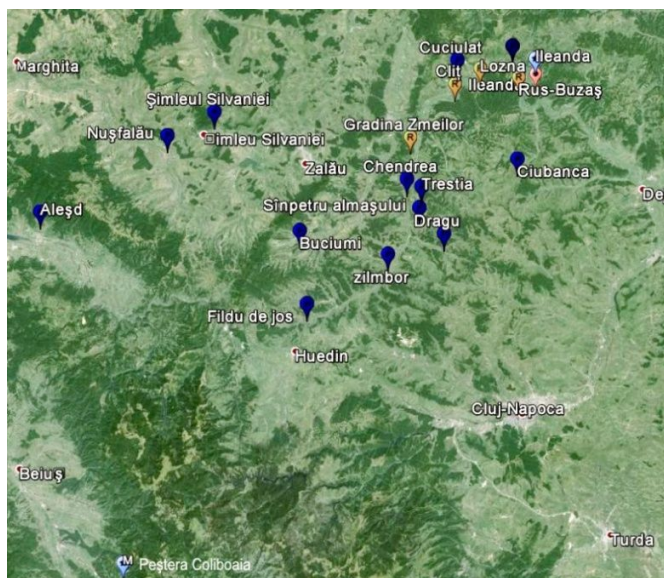


Fig. 2b. Paleolithic discoveries and rock art.

As a geographic unit, the area in discussion is part of the *Someș Plateau*, located to the north-west of the Transylvanian Plateau. It is crossed by the Someș river between Dej and Jibou. The landscape is formed of smooth inter-rivers, developed on a sedimentary substrate slightly inclined towards the south-east, with altitudes of 500-600 m⁸.

⁷ Pop, Ghemiș 2013; photographs by Radu Pop.

⁸ Istvan et alii 2011, 1 sqq.

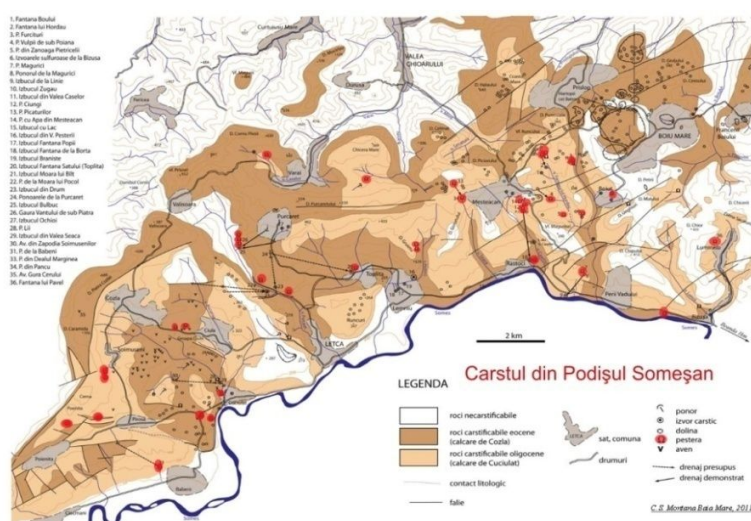


Fig. 3. The karst in the Someș Plateau according to Istvan, Tămaș, Minghiraș.

The northern part of the plateau comprises the Someș Plateau karst, which mainly developed in Eocene limestone (the Cozla formation) and in Oligocene limestone (the layers of Cuciulat, with the exception of the marno-arenaceous limestone from Bizușa)⁹. We must also mention the fact that there are different-density strata of sandstone and solidified sand, which were burrowed over the millenia, creating numerous rock shelters (abris), some over 150 m long.

While digging in the Cheile Turzii gorge, Radu Pop drew our attention to several sites with such discoveries; later, during special expeditions, we visited only a dozen of the cliffs with traces of rock art (fig. 2¹⁰).

We must mention that, as we noticed in other places with natural sanctuaries, people have left their mark on these rock shelters over time, by scratching their names, address or town. Such was the case in caves or outdoor sanctuaries¹¹ such as on Teasc Mountain and in the nearby area (Borsec – Ditrău –Toplița a.s.o.¹²), in the Buzăului Mountains Nucu area - *Fundu Peșterii*¹³ and at Ruginoasa - *Policiori*¹⁴ in the same area, and in other places (Grădina Zmeilor - eng. *Dragon Garden*, Sălaj county¹⁵). All these places add up to over a dozen sites with signs from all times.

⁹ Istvan et alii 2011, 3.

¹⁰ In order to spare them from vandalism, we will not disclose the exact location of the sites, as there are numerous collectors and lovers of „archeological souvenirs”.

¹¹ Lazarovici Gh. et alii 2001, I.1, 268.

¹² Lazarovici Gh., Lazarovici C.-M. 2011; Lazarovici Gh. et alii 2011; 2014, 2015.

¹³ *** Nucu-Fundu Peșterii 2012.

¹⁴ See the study done in cooperation with Diana-Liana Gavrila in this volume, and the bibliography for the area: Mândricel, Bortaș 2008; Gavrila 2012; *** Nucu-Fundu Peșterii 2012 see also other research and references regarding the area by these authors.

¹⁵ S.V. Grădina Zmeilor <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J-MhBsOxC50>, <http://www.romanialibera.ro/economie/finante-banci/salaj--legendele-care-aduc-turistii-in-gradina-zmeilor>, https://www.portal.ro/articole/despre/gradina_zmeilor_monument_al_naturii_5437

The tourist and scientific perspectives on the Someș cliffs

Judging by the look of the lowland Someș plains and by the traces of numerous old bends and meanders, we can assume that in ancient times the river used to have a wide, low basin. At present, the basin is narrower and deeper, the old meanders have been ploughed and swamps have been left on the sides, which are watered by side valleys, and some are blocked by recent road building between villages or by the railroad.

We can imagine that some of the cliffs washed by the river Someș were not grassy. As a general observation we mention the fact that almost all the cliffs on which we found rock art were preserved as cliff ledges, occasionally in veritable galleries, some over 150 m long (at Rus, fig. 8b, 8d, 8f). Since we are at the beginning of the research, we will analyze only certain, more general aspects, as our purpose in this study relates to signs and symbols. However, this study is also meant to sensitize the authorities to protect these rock art monuments. Since many of these are now in a poor state of conservation and the „souvenir” lovers are many, we will make only general references to their location. The Cuciulat cave has been closed down, but rock art is hard to protect without special projects, and for these projects is necessary a rigorous scientific knowledge, especially concerning their touristic significance.



Fig. 4. The cliffs around Cliș.



Fig. 5. Grottoes and abris in the Cliș area.



Fig. 6. Grădina Zmeilor, Călugăarii, Sălaj county.

In Sălaj county, historical and natural monuments have been cared for, as we can see in the case of the Porolissum archaeological park or the Grădina Zmeilor tourist natural park (fig. 6). The Someș cliffs could be a new point of interest in an area lacking big urban centers, very suitable to tourism and favorable to communities. An important travel route goes through the area: the road from Satu Mare – Cluj – București and from Satu Mare – Bistrița – Suceava-Iași. What's more, the links to Grădina Zmeilor round off the interest for new tourist attractions. From the Someș valley there are connections to the Roman fortress of Romita, down the Agriji valley towards Zalău.

Even though it has only been briefly researched, Grădina Zmeilor, on Călugărul Mare (fig. 7a) presents some older rock art, alongside recent graffiti (fig. 7b, 7c in yellow). This older rock art shows animals and predatory birds, judging by the beaks, and there are traces of it peeling off before the recent markings. We find such phenomena in other parts of Romania also, as well as abroad (fig. 8a, c).

Our research has been sporadic, more like a testing of the ground, and we didn't have the special equipment (such as lights) nor the time necessary to do a more advanced research. There is also an entire long row of cliffs towards the S-W which must be researched.



Fig. 7: a, Graffiti at Călugărul Mare; b, Recent writings (LJI, IE HELA), 2a, 2b Old engravings.

We must mention the fact that such cliffs are also present abroad, and some were transformed into archeological parks (those in which artifacts were found), which is desirable and necessary in our case also, in order to protect these areas. This project, still in its infancy, is meant to take things into that direction. Starting from the Rus area and up to the Grădina Zmeilor tourist park, from what we saw in our 4-5 expeditions in which we were accompanied and guided by Radu Pop, the Someș Cliffs present a majestic layout, creating natural shapes that some colleagues liken to paradise, or to a magical world. These cliffs with rock art are in no way inferior to the parks in western Europe (fig. 8a, c) and they demand a superior capitalization. Below we will analyze only some of the themes from the hundreds of existing situations (fig. 11, 14-18, 21-24a, 27-29, 31, 35/2-4, 36/1-2, 4-5), some of them dating from between 12.000-10.000 BC or before, such as the Ileanda case (fig. 10/1).

In Romania, rock signs and images from the Upper Paleolithic (cca. 12.000-10.000 BC) appear on several of these cliffs, while the oldest images in western Europe, in Perigordian, are dated between 30.000-20.000 BC (fig. 8a, c) and are contemporary to some of the famous rock art discoveries from southern France, Spain, Valca Monica (Camonica) in Italy and others.

The Cuciulat discoveries (fig. 10/1) are extremely important, and their photographs should deservedly be exhibited at a 1:1 scale in all Transylvanian museums, especially at Cluj and Sălaj, but even in the numerous hotels in these areas, to be seen by the tourists who come through here on their way to historical and folk-art monuments such as the wooden churches of Ileanda and Băbeni or the many other tourist attractions in the area.

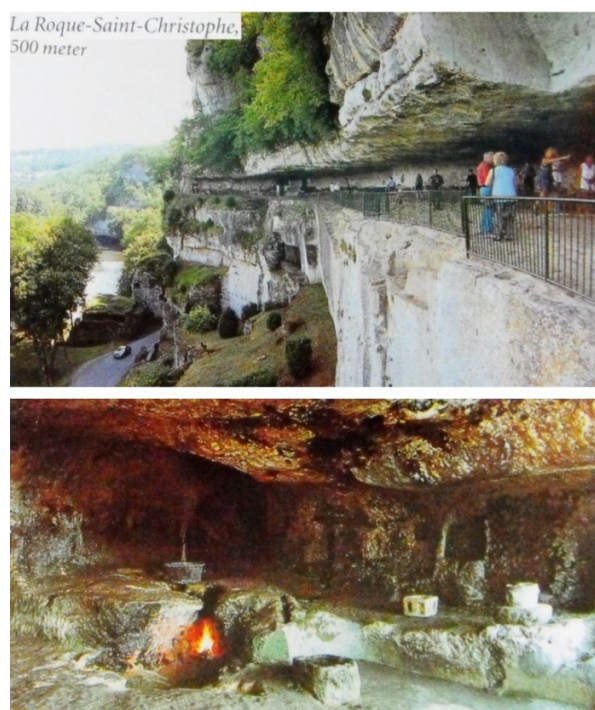
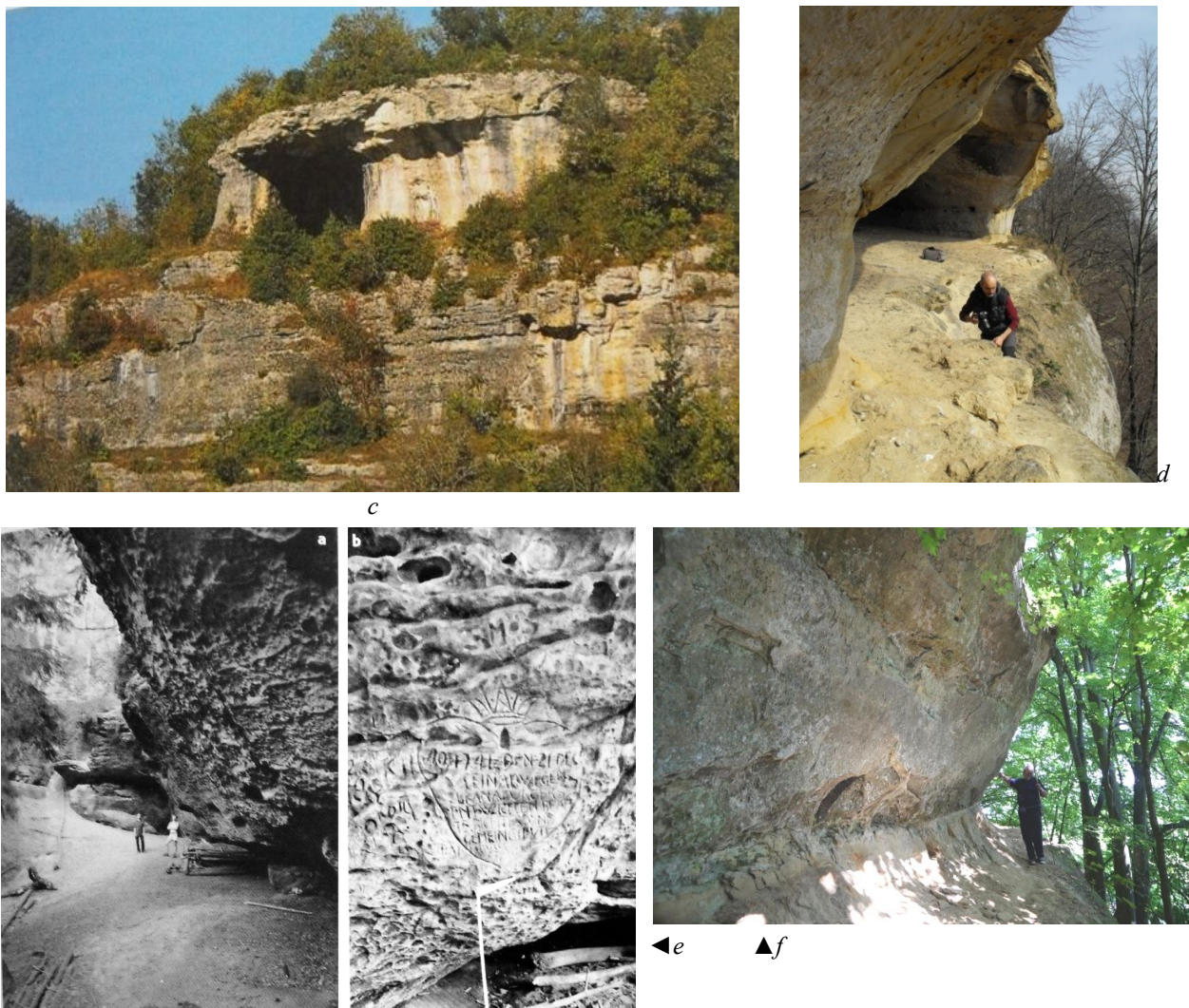
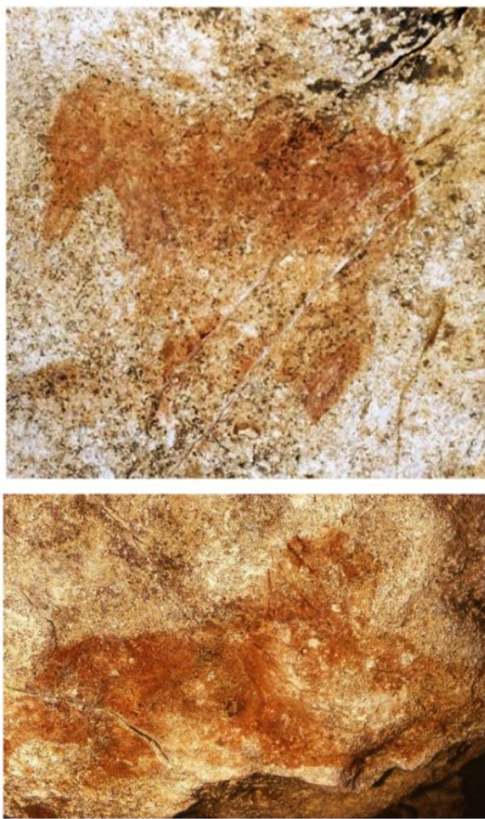


Fig. 8: a, the archeology park La Roque-Saint Christofe, Perigordian culture, Paleolithic; b, f, cliffs with grottoes, Rus level 3 (above); c, Perigordian, Van Les Eyzies, Sergeac Sarlat; e, Brandenburg Hohle- Marsovice, Czech Republic.



We emphasized what was done in western Europe to protect historical monuments (fig. 8a) with the purpose of giving an example of tourist capitalization to the Sălaj county authorities, who are sensitive to the need to protect historical and natural monuments.



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Fig. 10: 1, Cuciulat, the horse and the feline (according to Cărciumaru 2010, 52, fig. 9-10); 2-3, wooden churches: 2, Ileanda (Wikipedia); 3, Băbeni (photo by Lazarovici Gh., Pop).

The Someș Cliffs

Radu Pop and Călin Ghemiș published a number of rock engravings from the Someș Cliffs, but they also welcomed the visit of Mr. Jean Clottes, a reputable French specialist in rock art, who came especially to see these discoveries, as well as those from Coliboaia, 110 km away.

Jean Clottes confirmed the age and classification of the Someș Cliffs art as Upper Paleolithic¹⁶. A great number of the signs and images here are old, but as it happens most times with outdoor sanctuaries, they have been meanwhile visited, and other signs were added on, at different times in history, up until our times. People believe that their name remains eternal when they write it on rocks, but monuments must be protected. Special places must be set up near the monuments, including big stones for those who feel the need to immortalize their name for posterity.

The issues raised by these discoveries are extremely vast, but the present study doesn't relate to rock or parietal art (in caves, abris, on cliffs) but rather to the symbolism, more specifically to symbols which turn into

signs. We do not possess a special qualification in rock art, but we use this art as a source for analysis of symbol-signs. Both are means of communication between people or between Man and the Divine, as almost all prehistoric religions testify.

In the beginning of this study we mentioned some paleolithic discoveries in the south and a series of caves in the north, which proves that the area was inhabited from the Upper Paleolithic until the dawn of the Neolithic civilization, as seen in certain pieces analyzed by Al. Păunescu (see fig. 2). This confirms the dating and the estimations of our colleagues who studied these archeological sites. As we previously mentioned, the nearest Paleolithic site to our point of interest is the one from Perii Vadului, cca. 8 km down river.

The main themes which we find represented on the cliffs are the stag, the bull, the deer, the antelope, the rabbit, with some reference to their symbols, the horn and the skull. We must note that big fish appear in several images. We also briefly mention a series of abstract symbols found in the vicinity of the signs.

An exact dating of the signs and images is difficult and unsure, because the means at our disposal are relatively limited. We don't have the specialized techniques to analyze the traces of the tools used in their making. At the same time, there have been no archeological digs to see if there are any remnants of old habitations in the area. The few existing fire pits and smoke traces on the walls can also be recent. Without digs using specialized instruments and techniques, exact results are not possible, and for this reason we will not discuss these aspects.

Another issue relates to image interpretation, which can slightly differ from one specialist to another, especially as the images overlap and are eroded, making them difficult to identify. The discoveries were classified into several areas. Area I includes 75 catalogued groups, Area IV – 47 groups, Area II – 21 groups.

The engravings were made by incision: some are very deep and probably made by metal tools, others are more fine and it is possible that they were made by flint or metal tools. Only a few were done through scratching. However, the means or the tools used to make the signs don't offer any conclusions regarding dating: sometimes a figure is slightly chiselled, but the hand and the weapon are incised (Area IV, cat. 22). In other cases, the name and year appears, pointing towards a recent date. We also note that in many places the skin/bark of the rock wall is peeling off, damaged by time, leaving only the traces of a former figure on the sandy structure beneath. For this reason, many of the engravings can't be easily identified.

I. The stag, the altar – the Sun Stag

The stag is the most imposing and impressive figure of all those presented by the researchers, with extremely suggestive and good quality images¹⁷. The most important aspect of the stag is its branching antlers

¹⁷ Pop, Ghemiş 2013.

¹⁷ Pop, Ghemiş 2013.

(fig. 11 and others cat. I.57¹⁸). Because of these, and their annual, cyclical renewal, they were likened to the tree of life, in its vast symbolism. King of the forest through his size and antlers, the stag is a symbol of fecundity, of growth rhythms, of rebirth¹⁹. He is present in many mythologies.



Fig. 11. Stag 2 and the spear (Area 4 at Pop, Ghemiş): A, the stag; B, elephant ?; C, spear; D, tent.

The Sun Stag (Area IV)

It is believed that when he bellows, the stag brings all creation to life. Through the rays of his antlers he is like the sunrise, the dawn, the herald of light, showing the way towards daylight. In European mythology, the tree of life is presented as rising from antlers, according to the vision of St. Hubert.

Of all the attributes above, the symbolism of the stag presents him as a mediator between Heaven and Earth, with a cosmic vision relating to the light. In Greek-Roman mythology, the stag is the symbol of Diana – Artemis, the hunting virgin. There are many other attributes relating to it.

¹⁸ In 2016 the signs were catalogued: the Roman numerals represent the areas, the Arab numerals give the catalog number. To date, over 50 engravings and signs from this area have been catalogued, but the work continues.

²⁵ Chevalier, Gheerbrant 1995, under *Cerb* (Stag).



Fig. 12. The Big Stag 1 and the Bull 1 (according to Pop, Ghemiș, drawings by Pop Radu).

For paleolithic hunters, as well as for later human communities, the stag was a rich source for food, its antlers used as tools, either gathered from among the forest bushes or by the hunter hero (for whom they were a trophy). Occasionally the antlers were laid to rest in graves²⁰.

On Romanian territory, numerous rock art discoveries are recorded, by specialists in the Paleolithic all the way from C. S. Nicolăescu-Plopșor²¹ to Marin Cârciumar. The latter authored compilations on the subject²². Many other specialists made references to such discoveries²³. Among the more recent discoveries we mention those at Coliboaia cave, made by Călin Ghemiș²⁴ or those at Nucu-Fundu Peșterii²⁵, published in an esteemed recent compilation by Valeriu Sîrbu and other colleagues. In the later site, measures have been taken to protect the cave, which must be done also in the case of some of the discoveries which we will mention below. Some are in a state of natural degradation (the antelope area, fig. 18), others have been affected by later anthropic interventions (crosses, names, hourglasses, etc).

²⁰ Müller-Karpe 1968, II, Taf. 278.82.

²¹ Nicolăescu-Plopșor 1926; 1929.

²² Bitiri 1980; Bitiri, Cârciumar 1980; Cârciumar, Brijan 1988; 1989; Cârciumar 1987; 2010 and the bibliography of the new issues and sites.

²³ Luca, Gudea 2010, 44, catalogue 82, quoting Bitiri, Cârciumar 1980, 21-23; Lakó 1981, 51-52; Boroneanț 1977; Păunescu 2001, 449; Beldiman 2007, 31.

²⁴ Ghemiș et alii WEB.

²⁵ *** Nucu-Fundu Peșterii 2012; Mantu 1987; Mândricel, Bortaș 2008.



Fig. 13. Stag 2 and 3, Bull 2 near other signs and symbols (according to Pop and Ghemiş, drawings by Pop Radu).

Until the present time, in the discoveries from the Someş Cliffs sites the stag appears in various associations with the bull, the hunter, but also with hunting weapons such as the spear, the bow and arrow (Area I, III and IV, fig. 12-13²⁷). Area I presents hunting scenes, as opposed to Area IV, which has a special characteristic. In every case, various images overlap those of the stag, or the stag covers other images done in the same manner, which suggests that they originate in the same era (fig. 13). Only in Area IV the stag appears as the central figure while all other images are subordinate to him. We believe that in this situation, we are dealing with an outdoor altar.

We believe that the purpose of this altar, as is also the case in Area I, is to initiate the youth in the art of hunting. The image of the stag bears signs on the vital points of the animal (fig. 14c-d); the area of the heart is marked by arrow points and an encircling of the vital area. In other instances in rock art we note that the animal's blood is pouring from those areas (fig. 17b).

³⁶ Păunescu 2001, 450, mentioned by A. Orosz and M. Roska (1942, 314-315) as paleontological discoveries.

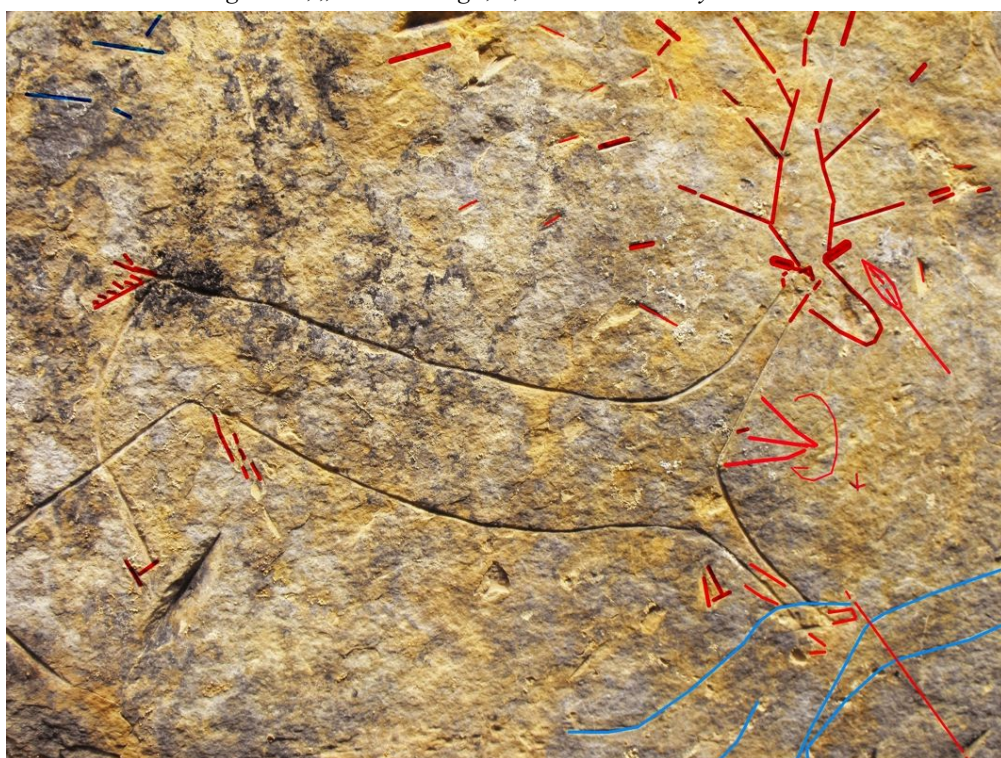
²⁷ Pop, Ghemiş 2013, fig. 2-3, 9.13, see here details regarding the scene location and size.

In the Someş basin, south of the rock art cliffs, items such as stag bones, mammoth bones and bones of other animals were discovered, which are thought to have been hunted in the Paleolithic²⁶. We see all these animals represented in the rock art.



a

Fig. 14: a, „The Sun Stag”; b, details marked by ourselves.



b



Fig. 14c-d. *The Sun Stag*, vital points: c, the heart area; d, the ear area



d

A second vital point is suggested in the head area, more exactly at the ear, where the bones are not as thick as in the forehead. This point is marked by a small man, a barely-sketched hunter, holding a spear or a bow facing the stag's ear. In order to emphasize the place, there is an arrow sketched with a bifacial flint tip, right next to the ear.

We named the zoomorphic figure *The Sun Stag* because a solar image is suggested around his antlers, through short lines. As a matter of fact, the antlers and the surrounding rays are made in the same manner as the animal's body.

Another figure associated to *the Sun Stag*, encouraging us to believe that this is an altar in an outdoor sanctuary,

is that of a small man. He is pictured in front of the stag in very fine, carefully drawn lines. Only the arm holding the flint-tipped spear, aiming at the stag's ear, is incised in the same manner as the contour of the animal's body. The man is wearing clothes made of leather bands, marked as narrow lines. In one hand, he's holding the spear with 2-3 fingers, in the other he seems to hold a loop or a sling (a folk-tool made of two sticks fastened with leather belts, used for thrashing wheat, beans, but also as a weapon).



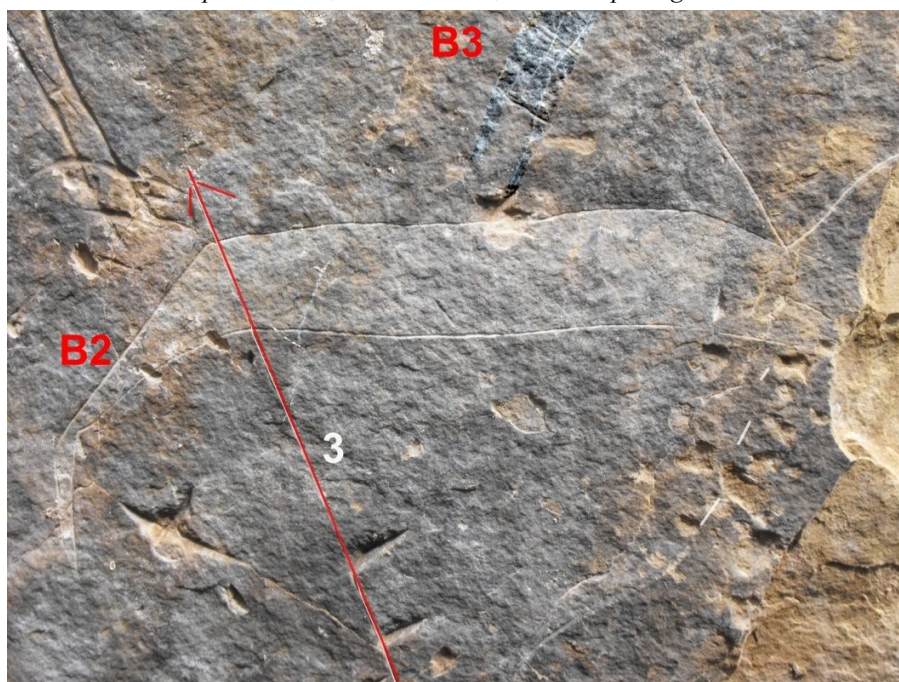
Fig. 15. Small man - the hunting spirit: a, original; b-c, touched-up images.



We named the antropomorphic image „small man” because his size is only slightly larger than the height of the stag’s antlers. At his feet we find other images. The little man stands above a horned animal whose horns are pictured in a „V” (fig. 15c). We could define the little man as the spirit of the hunter (fig. 15), because his image is finely engraved, only suggested.



Fig. 16: a, ▲ the hart (the image is touched-up inside), only his contour is rendered, to emphasize it; b, horned animal, touched-up image ▼ .



Under the stag there is a hart, whose image was pictured later, because his head crosses over the front leg of the stag. As in the case of the stag, with the hart also the vital points are pointed to by some arrows, pictured as narrow lines. The back legs are pierced by a flint-tipped spear. On its back, a series of hits mark white spots, like those we often meet in some species.

Another image in the pannel is a horned animal with V-shaped horns. Its front legs were hammered at some point, and its back legs were pierced by a long spear or arrow (fig. 16b, marking 3). From the animal’s snout on, the covering stone layer has peeled off, so we can’t know if there were other images as well.

The next engraving pannel is mainly dedicated

to weapons. Between the two pannels there is a break in the rock face which again leaves us unable to guess how the images continued.

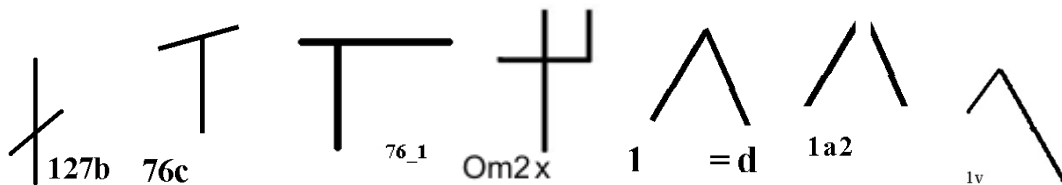
The main scene is dominated by a large-size spear (fig. 17).



Fig. 17: a, the pannel with the spear; b, detail; b1, detail with blood.



Fig. 17.b1-d. The pannel with the spear, details: b1, 3, abstracts; b2, spots of blood; c, spear; d, tent; e, DS signs ▼.



The spear appears in the small man's hand, under the belly of the hart, through the thighs of the horned animal. We have already discussed the spear scene. Under its point, several hits suggest blood spots. The tail has an accessory which suggests a feather or a hook for the throwing stick. Above it are arrow heads, which in Paleolithic art suggest the masculine or feminine gender (fig. 17b-e)²⁸. Under it are abstract signs (fig. 17e), some of them corresponding to signs from the DS (Danubian Script²⁹), as well as a tent. As in the first pannel, we believe the narrative here relates to the rites of passage and that the abri serves as a place for rest, instruction, protection of the initiates, and of course for the instructors.

In the present day, the mentioned images can be reached easily, because the erosion on the cliff edges and cliff top has caused the level to rise. However, in ancient times, these were higher, impossible to reach directly, as can be noted in the case of the Area I cliff (and in other sites in the area), where the rock art is at a height of 3 m. Even there, though, there has meanwhile been sedimentation.

Area I. The hunters' altar

Following expeditions in 2016, over 75 engravings and signs were registered and catalogued, and the identification and reconstruction work continues. The rock art is displayed in two registries, both of which have been damaged by the weather. Unfortunately, the images are in great danger of suffering destruction, because the

²⁸ *** *Der Grosse Bildatlas der Archäologie* 1991, 35, S1b, c, apud Leroi-Gourhan 1983.

²⁹ For codes see: Winn 1981; Haarmann 2008a; 2008b; Merlini 2009 and bibl; Lazarovici Gh. 2009; etc.

cemented stone bark on which the pictures were made has loosened and fallen, leaving only imprints in the slightly cemented sand underneath.

The degradation is slow, the figures at the top have almost disappeared. The best example we can give are three antelopes pictured jumping, in a remarkable artistic manner, which has analogies only in the famous franco-cantabric Paleolithic rock art.

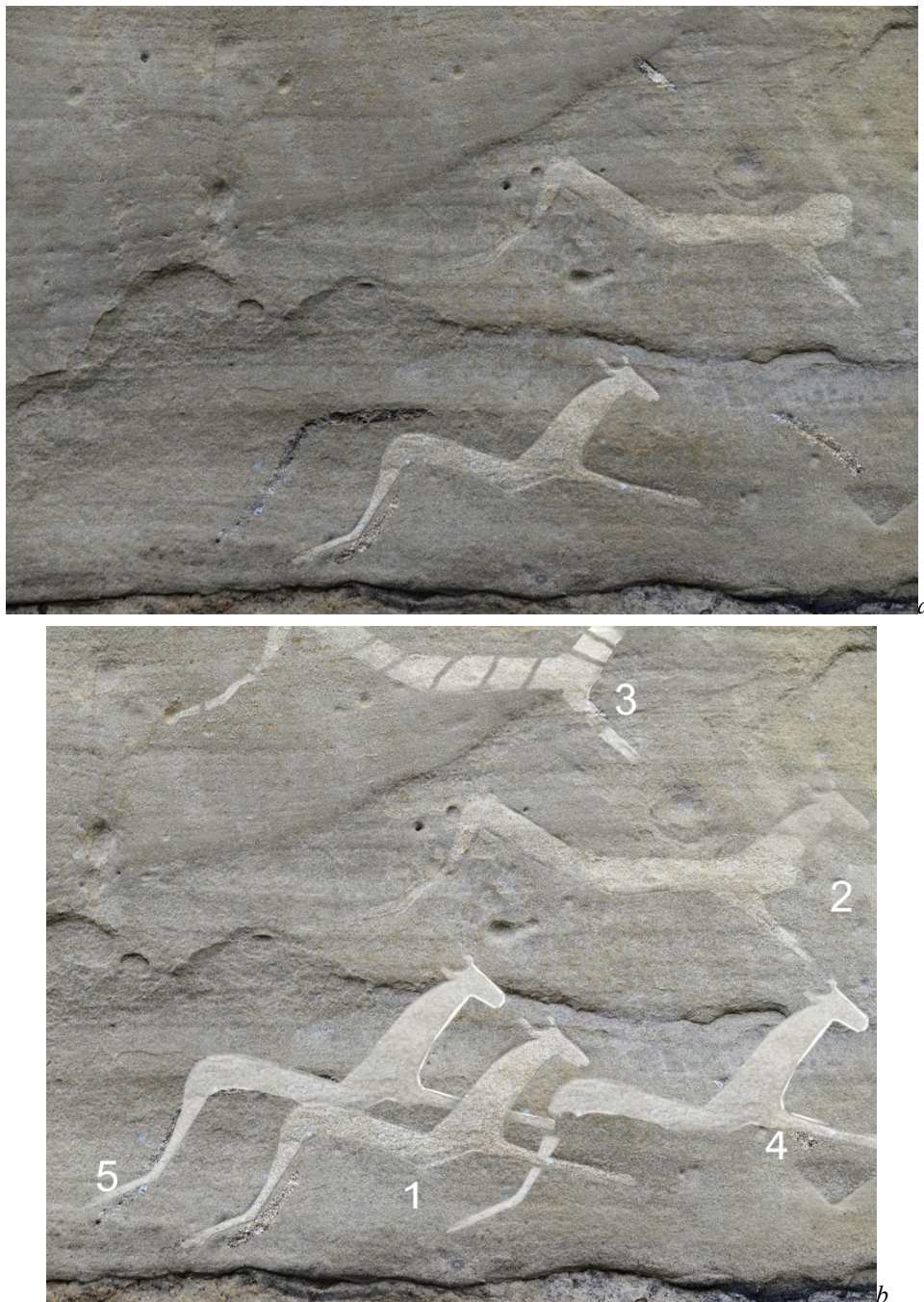


Fig. 18. Antelope flocks, reconstruction after body parts.

These antelopes and the style in which they were pictured, alongside stags, bulls and other animals, are the main element we use for chronological classification. They can be contemporaneous or late to the Cuciulat discoveries. However, as we already know, rock engravings are difficult to date, and only archeological digs in the area of the grottoes could bring forth new data regarding any habitats at the base of the cliffs – but even so, question marks remain.

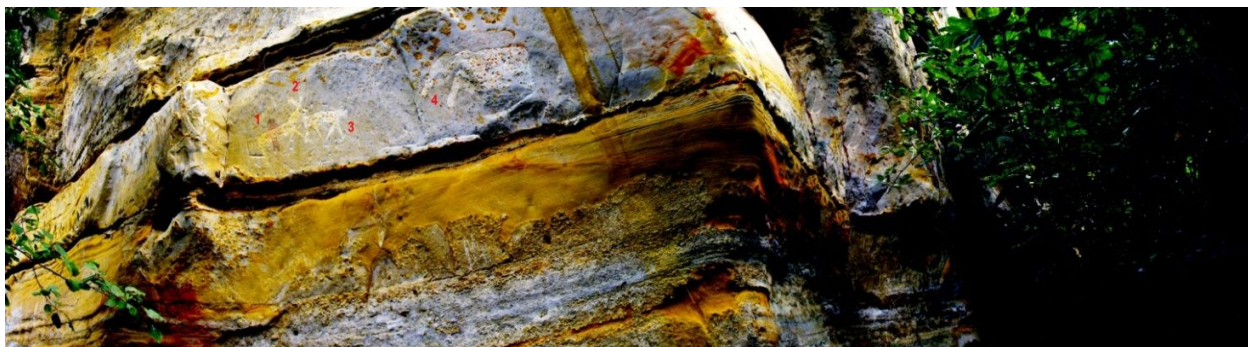


Fig. 19. Area I, panoramic view (the rock inclination is reversed from the right to the left).

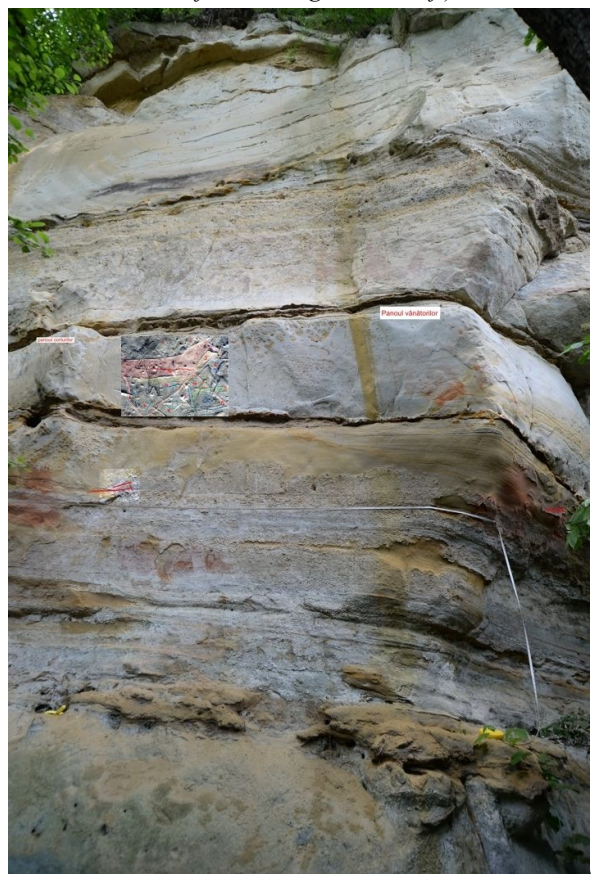


Fig. 20. Area I: a, Images with the Bird Pannel cat. 2. The Bird and the alveoli; b, images with the setting of the Hunters' Pannel.

The images are found on a length of 25 m and a width of almost 2 m, divided into two sets of pannels, according to the rock strata. The strata is inclined (reverse as in our image, fig. 19). In the beginning, the sandstone had a cemented calcarous bark (cover), which has meanwhile fallen, due to the fall of some blocks and to the erosions caused by the rain of the past millenia. On the portion that is preserved we note only the imprint in sandstone (fig. 21a), washed by the rains and erased by the winds. The rich vegetation at the edges barred us from taking more ample photographs of the areas.

Of the over 80 signs and images from this site, we will analyze only a few, relating to the theme of this study. The first pannel comprises three large, clear image-groups: the bird, the alveoli and the antelopes (fig. 18, 20), which we will analyze elsewhere. There are also a series of signs and symbols relating to the DS catalogues (fig. 21b the differing positions hold diverse meanings).



Fig. 21: a, Detail with the hunters' pannel, with the figures marked; b, symbols and signs from the pannel with correspondents in the DS.

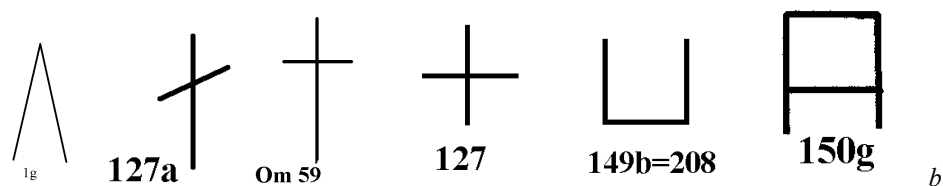


Fig. 22. The pannel of the tents and the enclosures.

The hunter (I. 48, 53, fig. 21a)

In Romania, we find human figures engraved or painted with coal in various places: the grottoes at Fănațe, Muierilor, Oilor, Pârcălabu, the gorges of Polovragi, Runcu a.s.o. Marin Cârciumaru has compiled a typology of these images, according to the position of the head, hands, legs and various other aspects³⁰.

³⁰ Cârciumaru 1988/1989, fig. 3-8.

However, such images also appear in European rock art and elsewhere in the world³¹, in which man – but especially the hunter – is very frequently pictured³². A great portion of these images picture packs of hunters attacking flocks of animals. Rock art offers several situations, in some of which the characters fight especially with bows³³, in others they are hunting. For this reason, we believe that this is a means of communication, of telling hunting stories, especially since the images overlap. There are, however, situations in which the human character is associated with the small man, as we saw above, in depicting rites of passage (above, cat. IV.22, fig. 15). On the cliffs in Area I a human character appears three times (fig. 21, no. 48 și 53; fig. 22, no. 28). On the cliff at *Hunters' Pannel* (fig. 23) the character appears in the middle of the pannel, above the images. Near it to the right are two oval shapes (fig. 23a, no. 4-5) which we interpret to be loops (cat. 47), even though the link between them and the hunter is not very clear. They could also be natural fissures or ferrous leakages (F3O4) in the previous incisions?

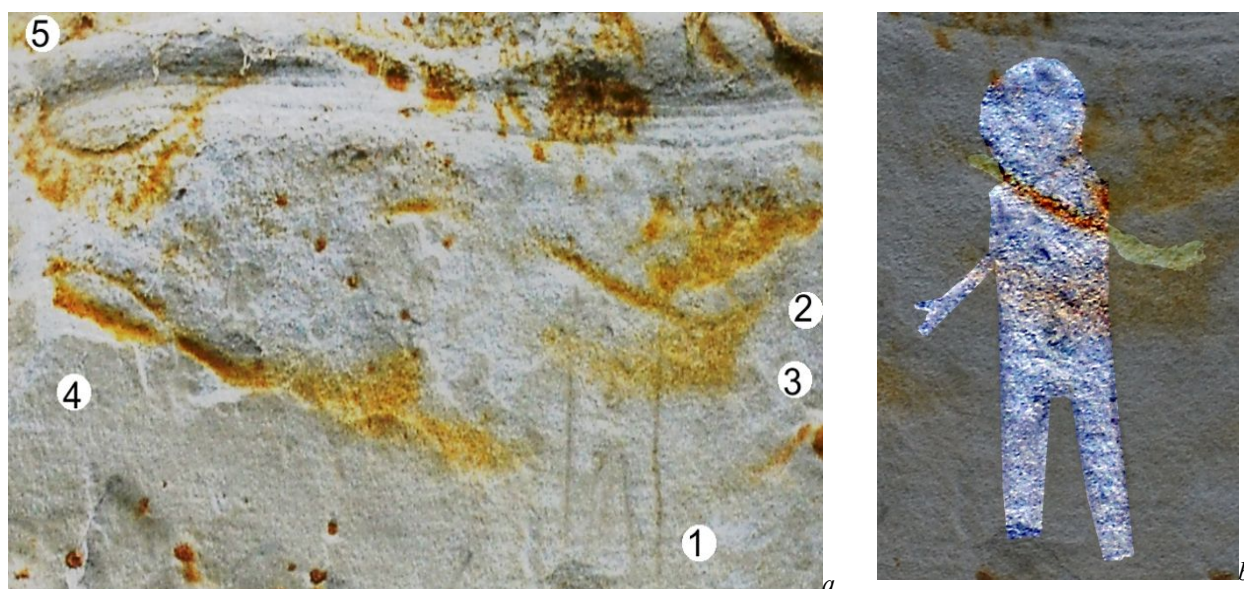


Fig. 23: a, *The Hunters' Pannel*; 1, cat. 48, the Hunter; 2, hand with lasso; 3, the hunter's bag; 4-5, lassoes; b, touched-up image.

Across the man's chest there is a line which could be a bow or a quiver (fig. 23a, no. 2). Around his middle there is another oblique spot (fig. 23a, no. 3), which could be the same as in fig. 22 cat. 88 (see there our interpretation). Since the man is placed at the center of the pannel, he appears to be an important character.

³¹ Nicolăescu-Plopșor 1926; Wirth 1931; Loth 1966; Leroi Gourhan 1983; *** Valcamonica Symposium 1970; *** L'art pléistocène 2010-2011; *** Arte Rupestre del Sahara 1995; Cărciumaru 1988/1989; 2010 and bibl.; Doboș 2005, 234 and bibl.; etc.

³² Cărciumaru 2010, 81, fig. 53; Müller-Karpe 1968, II, Taf. 264C; Graziosi 1996; and others.

A second man (fig. 24a, on the *Pannel of tents and enclosures*, I.88) also seems to be a hunter, judging by his position and weapons. We emphasized in red the elements of his contour, and in yellow his clothes, as well as a series of weapons: the spear or arrow in the right hand, the bow in the left hand (fig. 24c), a quiver for arrows and other weapons (fig. 24b), a quiver for arrows and other objects (fig. 24d), head decorations, most likely feathers, fig. 24b, d.

The elements and attributes which define the character bear resemblance to other rock art images. The bow and arrow, ready at hand, are like in other images with hunters.

We find the closest analogies at Çatal Höyük, in a bull-hunting scene where the hunters bear bows and quivers³⁴.

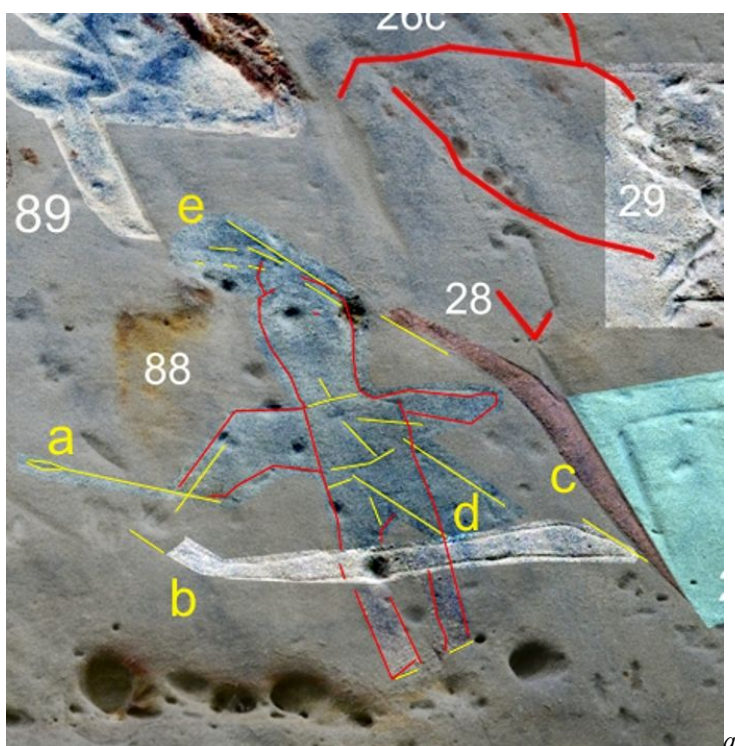


Fig. 24a. Hunter with weapons.



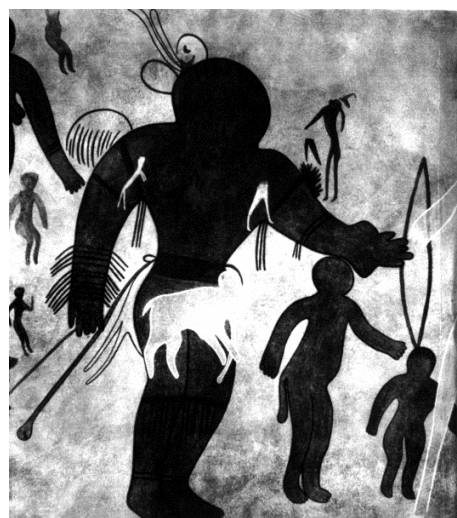
Fig. 24b-d.; b, Cueva de la Sarga, apud Martinez 1979; c-d, Tassili.

³³ War between hunters, Müller-Karpe 1968, II, Taf. 264C, Cheile Gasulla, cat. 466 A.

³⁴ Martinez 1979; Lothe 1966, fig. 40, 42, 43 and others.



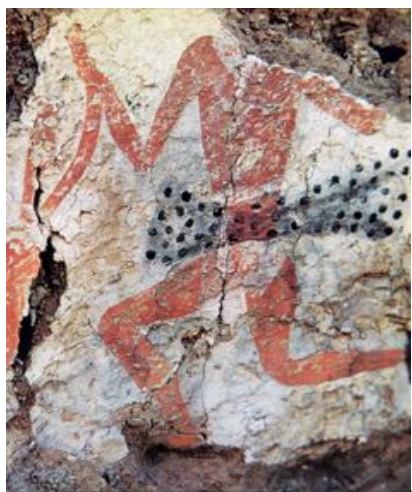
c



d

Hunters with bows in their hands also appear on the Tassili frescoes (fig. 24c-d), where the hunter holds the bows in his hand, the quiver for the bow around the middle and has arrows in the quiver (at other times the arrows are worn on his back). Regarding the head decoration with feathers, and the long face of the character in Area 1 (fig. 24a, no. 88), we find analogies at Cueva de la Sarga (fig. 24b)³⁵.

We also note that our hunter holds the bow in his left hand (fig. 24c), while his right hand holds a flint-tipped arrow (fig. 24a). We find almost identical scenes in the Garaja grotto. The head decoration with feathers, frequently found with hunters, is also found in other rock art images in the Garaja (fig. 25g), Fînațe (fig. 25e), Vadu Oii and Muierilor grottoes (fig. 25f)³⁶.



a



b

³⁵ Martinez 1979.

³⁶ Cârciumaru 2010, fig. 19.k, 5, 7-8 etc.



Fig. 25. Çatal Höyük.

At Çatal Höyük, in a hunting scene with bulls, stags, harts a.s.o, each hunter has a quiver around his middle, for bearing arms (fig. 25, detail). From the frescoes we recognize the hunting weapons which we marked: bolas (to stop the animals from running, fig. 25c/1); axe (fig. 25c/2), a great scythe (fig. 25c/3), a sort of racquet (fig. 25c/4), a bow (fig. 25c/5), nets (fig. 25c/6) and others. We also recognize corresponding fighting styles.

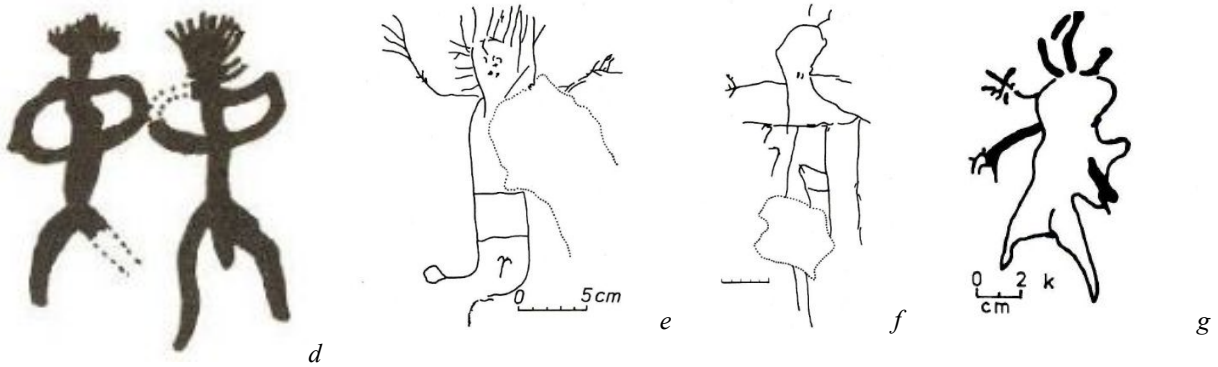


Fig. 25: e-f, Fânațe; d, g, La Grote Garaja, Jimena, Jaèn; d-f, according to Cârciumaru 2010.

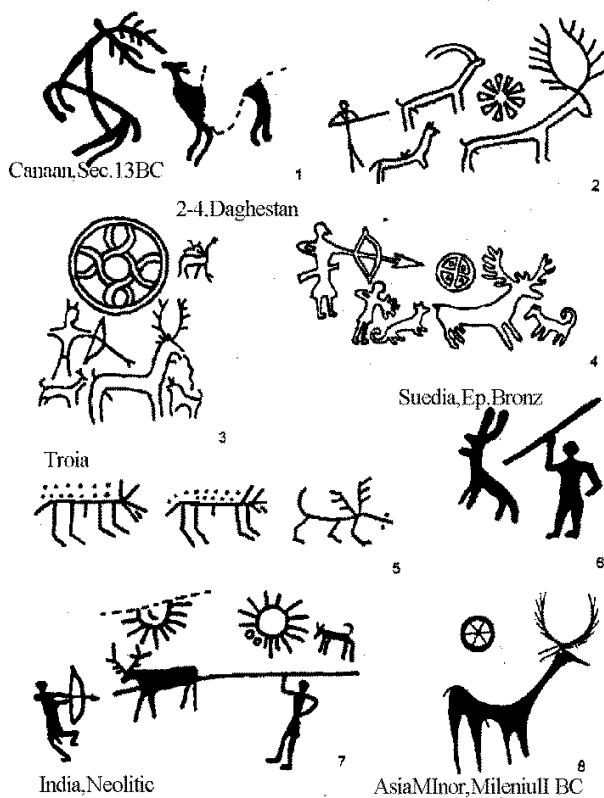
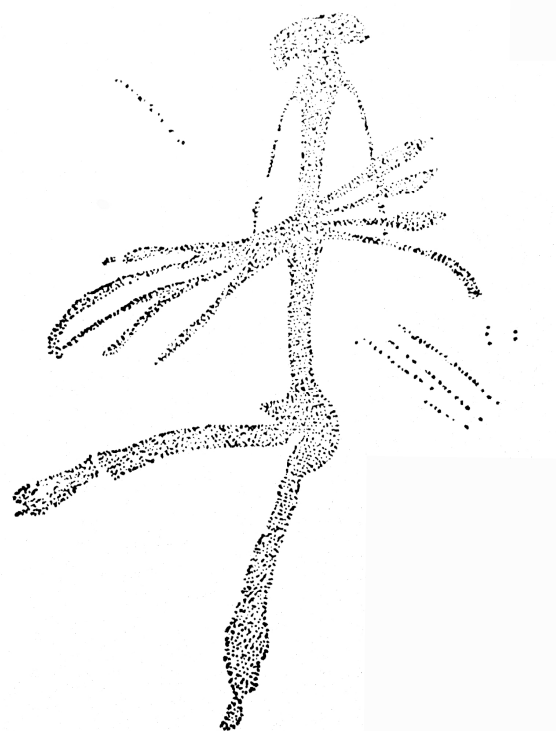


Fig. 26a. Hunting scenes (according to Golan 2003).

In the images, various animals are pictured at different stages, which overlap. We tried to find an explanation (fig. 21a); others seem chaotic (fig. 13), so we tried a different interpretation, naturally with some reserve as to which interpretation must be kept. The most significant and clearly expressed images, easily recognisable because of the antlers, are the stag images (for which sometimes only the antlers survived, as they were inscribed deeper: cat. I.18, I.57) and the hart images (cat. IV.18, I.28, 65).



Uldecona. Abrigo 2. Arquero. Tamaño natural. ^b

Fig. 26b. Hunter with bow and arrows.



Fig. 27. Hunters: a, original images; b, touched-up images.

We stated that we are dealing with altars. With the *Sun Stag* the antlers suggested rays, as is the case in various other mythologies which associated the stag with the sun (fig. 26a/2-4, 7-8). The weapons in this case were the spear and the bow (fig. 26a/6-7).

There are numerous images depicting stag-hunting, as well as huntings of other horned animals, in all rock art, in most ages and in various parts of the world³⁷. The stag appears in the Neolithic as a protector of grain jars³⁸, as a bringer and carrier of light³⁹.

On the cliffs that we are studying the human image appears in only three situations: first, the small man appears in Area IV.22 (see the above commentaries), and he appears twice in the Hunters' altar, Area I.48 and 53, fig. 27).

The most expressive image is the one in which the human figure is the same size as a stag (fig. 27a).

We notice two human figures in the area. The most recent is a man (fig. 27b/1 in pink), holding a spear in his right hand (fig. 27b/3, in red), which

³⁷ Müller-Karpe 1968, II, Taf. 118.1, 5, 7, 191.1, 121.3-4, 8 level V; 270B, 271b.

³⁸ Kutzián 1944, pl. II.1, XVII.1; Müller-Karpe 1968, II, Taf. 183B.4.

³⁹ Lazarovici Gh. 2009, fig. 24.

he uses to hunt a wild horse (fig. 27b/2, in yellow). It seems that the spear is piercing the horse's heart under the right shoulder blade, through the ribcage.

An older image (sadly, almost completely destroyed, fig. 27b/4), seems to also depict a hunter, judging by the quiver (fig. 27b/5). He was probably depicted in relation to another hunted animal (fig. 27b/6, in a lighter shade).

The horse is another legendary image, holding also the usual double significance: the horse of the darkness, which springs forward in gallop, his blood rushing, all the way from the darkness of the chthonian deep, from the innards of the earth, doing all these actions at night⁴⁰; and the good alternative, the day-horse, in a white robe of glory, becoming the uranian and solar symbol of the world of the good gods and heroes⁴¹. Of course, we believe that these horse legends were not born then, when he was hunted for his meat, but in both images we see the elegance of his legs (fig. 27b/6), the springing forward and his legendary gallop. The horse's tail could be represented in both cases by two cuts, as the tail had a great importance for the hunter for the thickness of its hair, used to make clothes, weapons and others.

Regarding the second hunter, we note that he has a quiver for weapons around his waist (fig. 27b/5), similar to those at Çatal Höyük (fig. 25c), which shows us that over 2-3 millenia, the good ideas relating to hunting tools spread out and improved.

The bull and several other animals

In the wild, the bull represents energy, an unleashed, unstoppable force, the thunder, the lightning, the storm. The bull is a sacred animal for the farming communities. Around the home, the bull suggests kindness, goodness, calm, force, sacrifice, the fruitful rain, the richness of the earth. Cosmically, the energies of the two bulls combine. His attributes, the skull, the horns, complete the symbolism.

Regarding the symbols of the bull and especially of the bull skull, there is a more detailed study in this volume, done by Cornelia-Magda and Gheorghe Lazarovici, so we will not repeat the themes or the symbolism relating to the wild or domestic bull, nor those relating to the Heavenly, Uranian Bull.

The bull is present in Area I, cat. 1, 14, 49, 59, however the state of its preservation differs from one pannel to the next.

From West to East, on the *antelope pannel*, the first image is that of a bull (cat. I.1). The image is preserved only as an imprint, as are the rest on this pannel; the sandstone top-layer with the original drawing fell off, so that only parts of it are left (fig. 28b-c). Judging from the shape of its body, this must be an impressive

⁴⁰ The horses of Sântoader... traditions from Banat (Milcoveni village), when the young lads start fires at night, then jump over them.

specimen. It has a long tail and a full body, for which reason we consider it to be a bull. Unfortunately we don't know the context in which it was engraved, as the images surrounding it have been eroded by time.



Fig. 28. Alveoli pannel; a, general view; b-c, headless bull;



⁴¹ Chevalier, Gheerbrant 1995, 225-226.

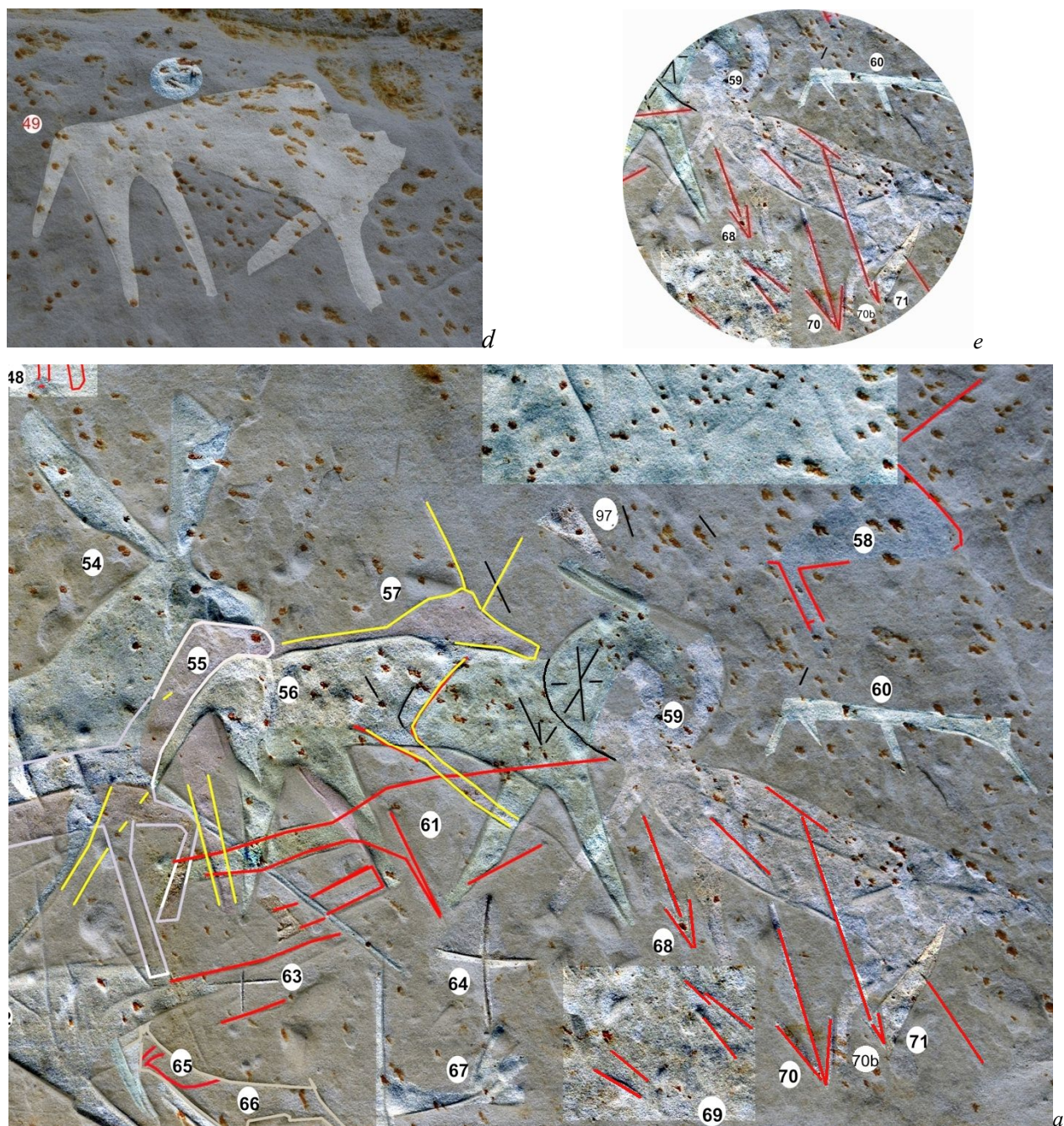


Fig. 29a. Bulls, horned animals and perhaps mammoths (photograph taken in summer, in the shade);

Another image, unfortunately without details of the head (cat. I.49, fig. 28d), is judged to be a bull, by the massive body. Underneath this image appears the figure of a horned animal, whose V-shaped horns and front legs have been preserved (cat. I. 58, fig. 29a). As a matter of fact, such horned animals with V-shaped horns also appear in other situations (cat. I.33, 57, 58). One image of a horned animal, albeit not very clear (cat. I.59, fig.

29, no. 59) presents a body pierced by arrows and spears with a V-shaped point (cat. I.68, 70b, 71) going through the front legs, body and back legs.

Another horned image (cat. I.56), later modified in the head area by the addition of deeper lines, suggests a goat, but judging from the body shape and size we believe it looks rather like a large horned animal (stag, judging by the horns, or bull, judging by the tail fig. 29, no. 56). The image has a 6-spike rosette on the neck, probably suggesting a sun, such as we saw earlier in the case of the stag (fig. 26a/2-4, 8). The image also presents a curvature (which we marked with a black line, as an extension of the curvature of the neck). On this animal's body also the front leg area and the body present arrows (hooked lines, marked in black).

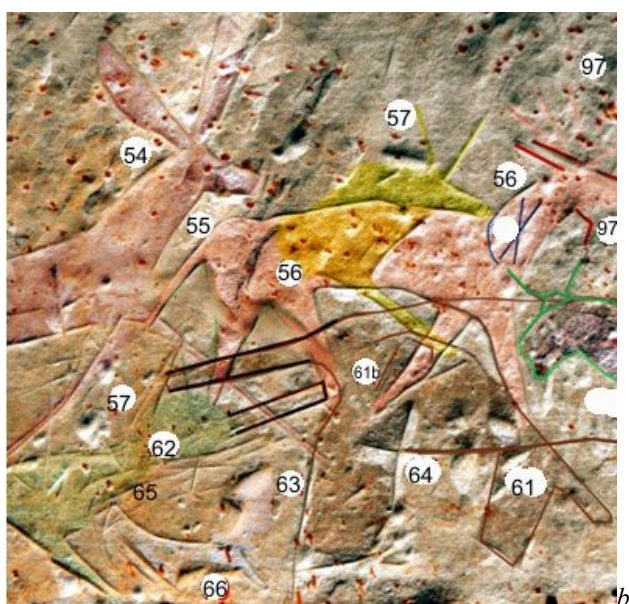


Fig. 29b. Photography of spring, with sun.

remain simple speculation.

During those cold ages, the presence of the mammoth was possible, but in the late Neolithic, during the Precucuteni culture, it wasn't. Even so, on the Isaiia tablet (Precucuteni, for comparison see fig. 30) there are three elephant families with their calves, which are located between the parents (fig. 30/2), next to the father (fig. 30/3) or next to the mother (fig. 30/4)⁴³.

Around these we find other, older images, quite erased, which lead us to think they could picture mammoths⁴² (fig. 29a, cat. 61 marked in red). This animal is also present in other areas; in all cases, the images belong to the oldest times and are covered by 3-4 ages of rock art. The image from fig. 29b, cat. 61b could represent a mammoth calf. Another mammoth could be pictured in the image in fig. 29, cat. 61b or PA10 the *Alveoli Pannel*.

We cannot ignore the fact that this latter image is on the top pannel, which could signify that during the last ice age, the walking level could have been higher. However, without digs, these theories

⁴² In the photographs taken during various times of the year, the light falls at various angles on the images, so that some of them seem to have another appearance. For this reason, it will be possible to get more precise results only after years of study. We will return to this issue.

⁴³ The interpretation is ours, see Lazarovici Gh., Lazarovici C.-M. 2014, 206, 221, fig. 60c.

Such images are not singular. There are elephant images at Donja Branjevina⁴⁴, in the civilizations along the Adriatic coast (in the Danilo, Smilčić, Hvar, Vučedol cultures⁴⁵) but also in Banat, at Ronaț, where a dromedary is pictured⁴⁶.

All these civilizations were in contact with the African areas across the Mediterranean⁴⁷, and those in our areas with Anatolia. This all shows us how far and how fast ideas and myths travel. Studying what happens later in history, we can find certain explanations for some drawings or situations in rock art.

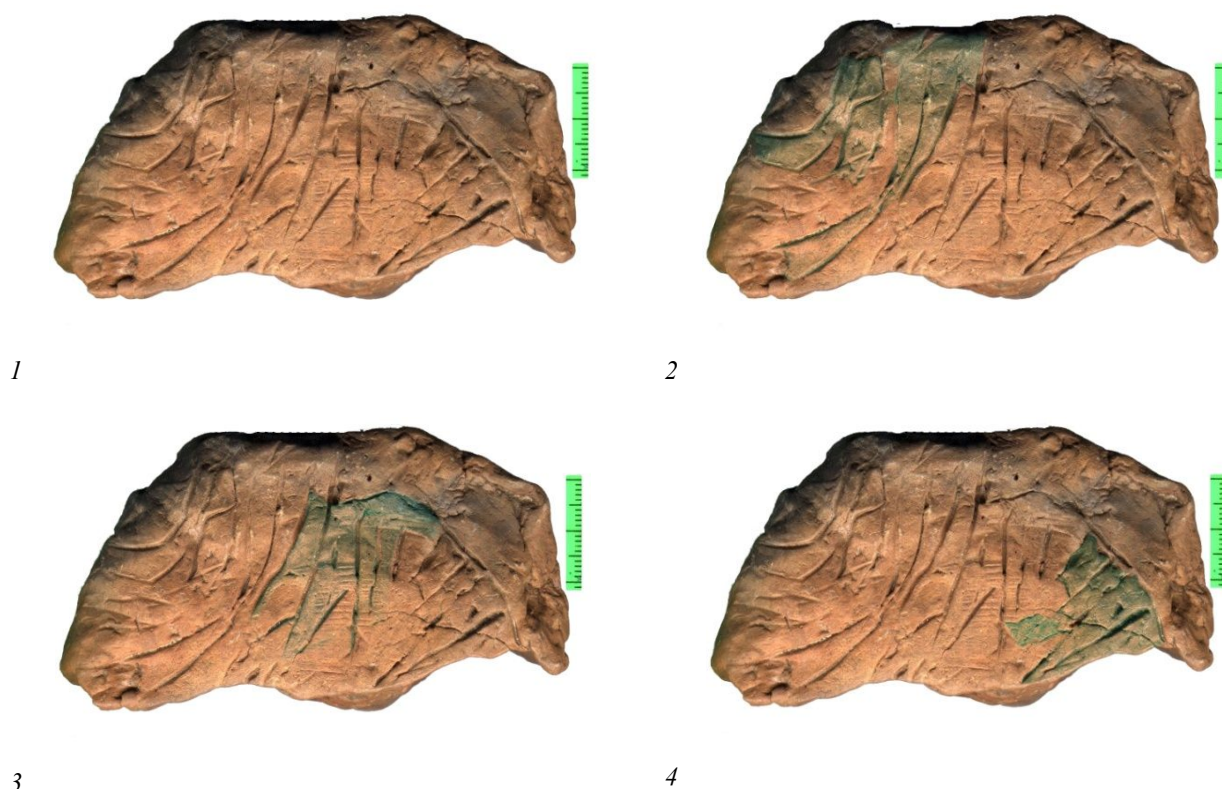


Fig. 30. *Isaia (Pre-cucuteni), tablet with elephant families.*

The wild bull is best pictured on an engraving in Area 3 (fig. 31.4) with gigantic horns and an elongated neck. Above it is a stag with impressive antlers (fig. 31.4).

⁴⁴ Srejšović 1969, 76.

⁴⁵ Müller-Karpe 1968, II, Taf. 318, R, Y, W, U; PraistJugZemalja 1979, II, pl. LXXXVI/2, apud Dimitrijević XCIV.1; Lazarovici Gh. et alii 2011.

⁴⁶ Lazarovici Gh., Lazarovici C.-M. 2014, 206, 221, fig. 60c.

⁴⁷ Müller-Karpe 1968, II, Taf. 18A.3, 9; 20.45, 56.K.17.



Fig. 31a. Area 3: 1, animal head; 2, stag; 3, man with a loop/lasso 4, Bull; 5, enclosure (?)

a quadrangle (fig. 31/5). We deduce from the above that this is a hunting scene. As the images in Area 3 haven't been catalogued yet, we will not insist on interpreting this scene. We must however note the artistic sense of the image and the difficulty of rendering these animal images through incision.

In the back side, we recognize a human figure holding a lasso (fig. 31/3).

Next to the stag's antlers and body we note a barely-scratched figure, of a darker color, which leaves the impression that it was painted⁴⁸.

Behind the stag antlers we make out the head of a cattle, from an older period (fig. 31/1). In front of the bull's crown we see an enclosure in the shape of

⁴⁸ We noticed traces of paintings in several places, but unless they are associated with incisions, as in the above cases, the characters are difficult to define.



Fig. 31b. Rock art at Lascaux.

In painted rock art, animals – and especially stags and bulls – express great energy of movement, as in the famous case of Lascaux (fig. 31b). We see the same movement in some of our images (fig. 10/1, 12/14, 16, 17a, 18a, 21a, 27, 28. Cat. 49c-e, 29, cat. 56), but especially in the case of the antelopes (fig. 18). As a matter of fact, the figurines from Gura Baciului, known from the digs done by N. Vlassa, are very significant for the presence of the wild bull in the Early Neolithic. In their case, the unknown artist had poured much artistic force especially in the horns and the shoulder blade area⁴⁹.

The theme of the lassoed hunter also appears in painted rock art in Spain, in two instances:

- at Alpera, the hunter directs an arrow toward the stag's heart, which seems to be bleeding (fig. 32b/1⁵⁰);

- at Minateda⁵¹ the lasso circles around the horns (fig. 32b/2).

In both scenes, there are wild bulls, a stag and hunters.

Regarding the theme of the sacrificial bull, we must refer to the domestic bull. The information surrounding the domestic bull comes from the protohistoric and historic ages of rock art in Egypt⁵². Analogies are important to show that behind these images stand a series of myths.

⁴⁹ Vlassa 1972 = 1976, 211, 14.8, 10 a-f; Lazarovici Gh., Maxim 1995, fig. 23.

⁵⁰ Müller - Karpe 1968, Taf. 264C, Kat. 465.

⁵¹ Müller - Karpe 1968, Taf. 270A, Kat. 480.

⁵² Arte Rupestre del Sahara, Torino 1995.



Fig. 32a. Gura Baciului. Figurine of a wild bull (photo by Lazarovici).



Fig. 32b. Hunting scenes in painted rock art from Spain: 1, Alpera; 2, Minateda (according to Müller-Karpe, 1968).

In one scene, a priest takes a herd of bulls with decorations between their horns to be sacrificed (fig. 33a). In another case, a woman offers a bull (which she is holding by a string) to be sacrificed by a figure with bull head with sun (the goddess Isis); out of the long navel of the bull-headed character, buried underground and shaped like an egg springs a mask with a beak apparently belonging to a hawk or an eagle (symbol of the god Horus). Under it there is an image, which is lying down (fig. 33b). This scene reminds us of the birth of Horus... „Oh, gods are Isis the sister of Osiris... I conceived the image of the god in an egg (embryo), the son of the head of the eternal gods, and he will rule this earth, will inherit Cheb, will kill Seth...”⁵³. Of course, in the preceding ages there were also similar myths, which we can only guess, when we deal with masks on heads of idols, repeating over time. However, the rituals allude us.

⁵³ Matie 1958, 107-108.

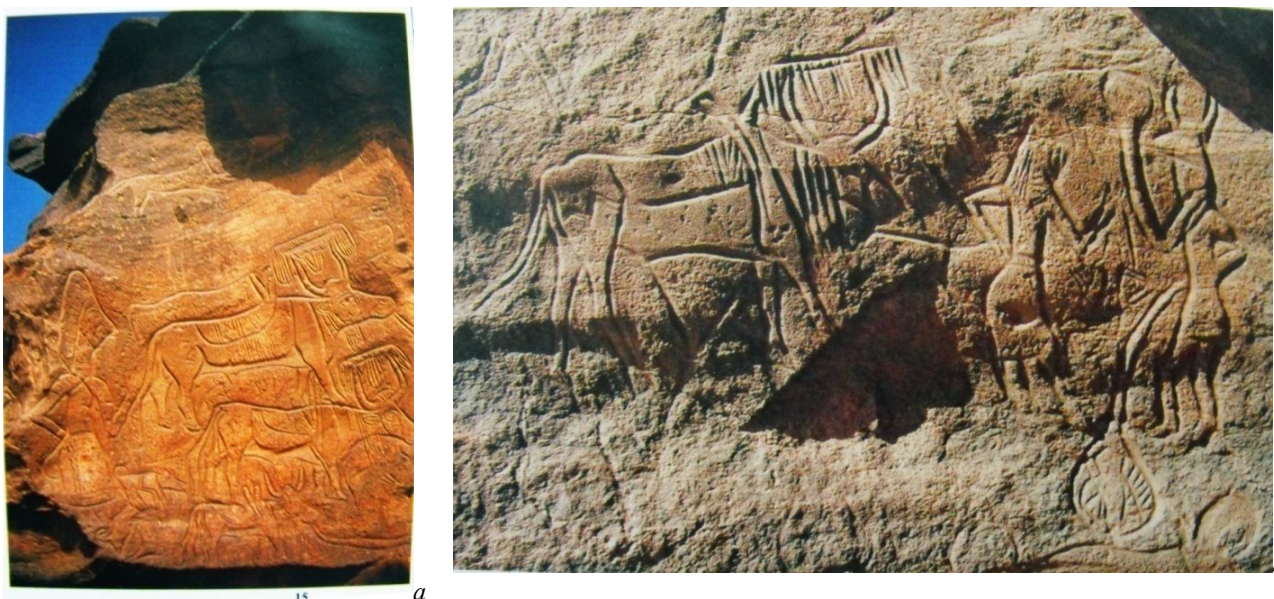


Fig. 33: a, Bull herds driven by a character with a diadem (priest); b, scene with the bull offering; according to *Arte Rupestre del Sahara* 1995, fig. 15 (a), fig. 18 (b).

The weapons at Someș Cliffs

If we briefly analyze certain engravings, separately from others, we could say that they were done in other historical periods. However, if we treat all the images in the area as a whole (even though they haven't been completely catalogued and individually described), if we become familiar with their styles, significance and especially their overlap, we note that the hunting scenes are almost unitary. Some isolated signs, made more or less carefully by the use of other instruments, do indeed come from differing historical periods.

We also note that in the last 200 years (according to the date of some inscriptions in which the year appears), the area has been visited, and people have left their first or last name as a remembrance of their passing through. Some of the signs are recent (the cross, the covered cross) and were made using metal tools scratching the calcareous bark. They are also deeper than the rest. Others were made through the hitting⁵⁴ technique, with various instruments, some of which metal, yet others through the pointing technique. For these reasons, we will not dwell on them now.

At Perii Vadului, in the site where digs were made, a flint tip and small chisels were discovered, which could have been used as tips for arrows or spears. The leafy pieces from the Mousterian and Aurignacian could have also been used for spears. In the Mesolithic there are arrow tips with a stem for tying down (fig. 34/1), and also larger ones which could have been used for spears (fig. 34.1/12-16 și 34.2/1).

⁵⁴ The technique used here differs from the famous rock art sanctuaries in Northern Italy – the Monica Valley and others, and from the ones from the Levant, most of which depict hunting scenes and provide data from the digs. Their beginning has been confirmed to be in the upper Paleolithic or Mesolithic (those in the Levant). These scenes have lasted in some areas for millenia, through the same techniques.

Weapons hold an important role in the estimation of chronologic dates, even though there are no specialized studies on these types of weapons.

The bow and arrow

It is possible that simple splinters were used for arrows, however in the areas with rock art we see arrows with stems (fig. 34/1). The same is true for the mountainous areas where we talk about a Swiderian age with specialized hunters (9000-6000 BC⁵⁵).

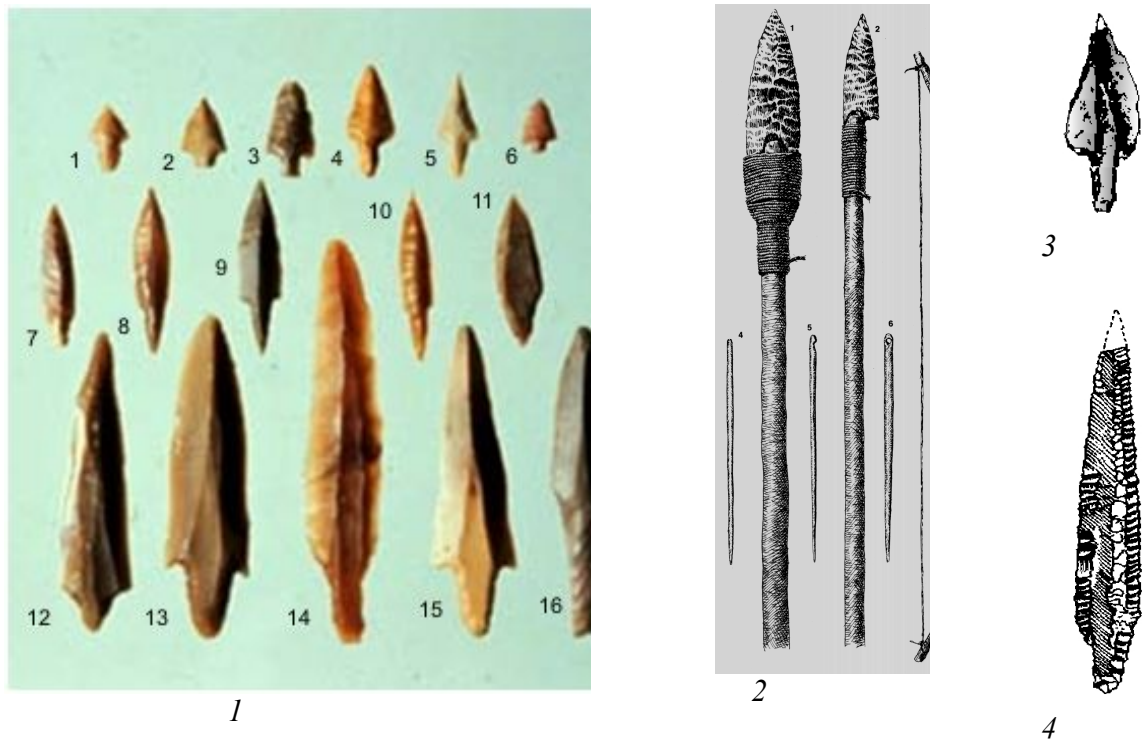


Fig. 34. Bows and arrows: 1, arrow tips and spear from the Mesolithic and Neolithic; 2, weapons reconstructions; 3, swiderian tip; 4, spear tip (apud Mellaart).

There isn't much data regarding the arrows with flint tips, because there are no vast paleolithic digs in these areas. At Hemma (Djezireh syrienne, fig. 34/1-11), rock art images were discovered which picture stone enclosures, nets or fences around enclosures where the animals were being taken⁵⁶. The books which offer a general overview of prehistory provide a remake of the main types of weapons, and we find some of these in

⁵⁵ IstRom I, 1960, 28-29, fig. 4.

⁵⁶ Van Berg 2003, WEB 1; WEB 2.

rock art images (fig. 34/2). We find certain arrow tips with stems in the Swiderian (fig. 34/3⁵⁷) or in the earliest Neolithic in Anatolia (fig. 34/4⁵⁸).

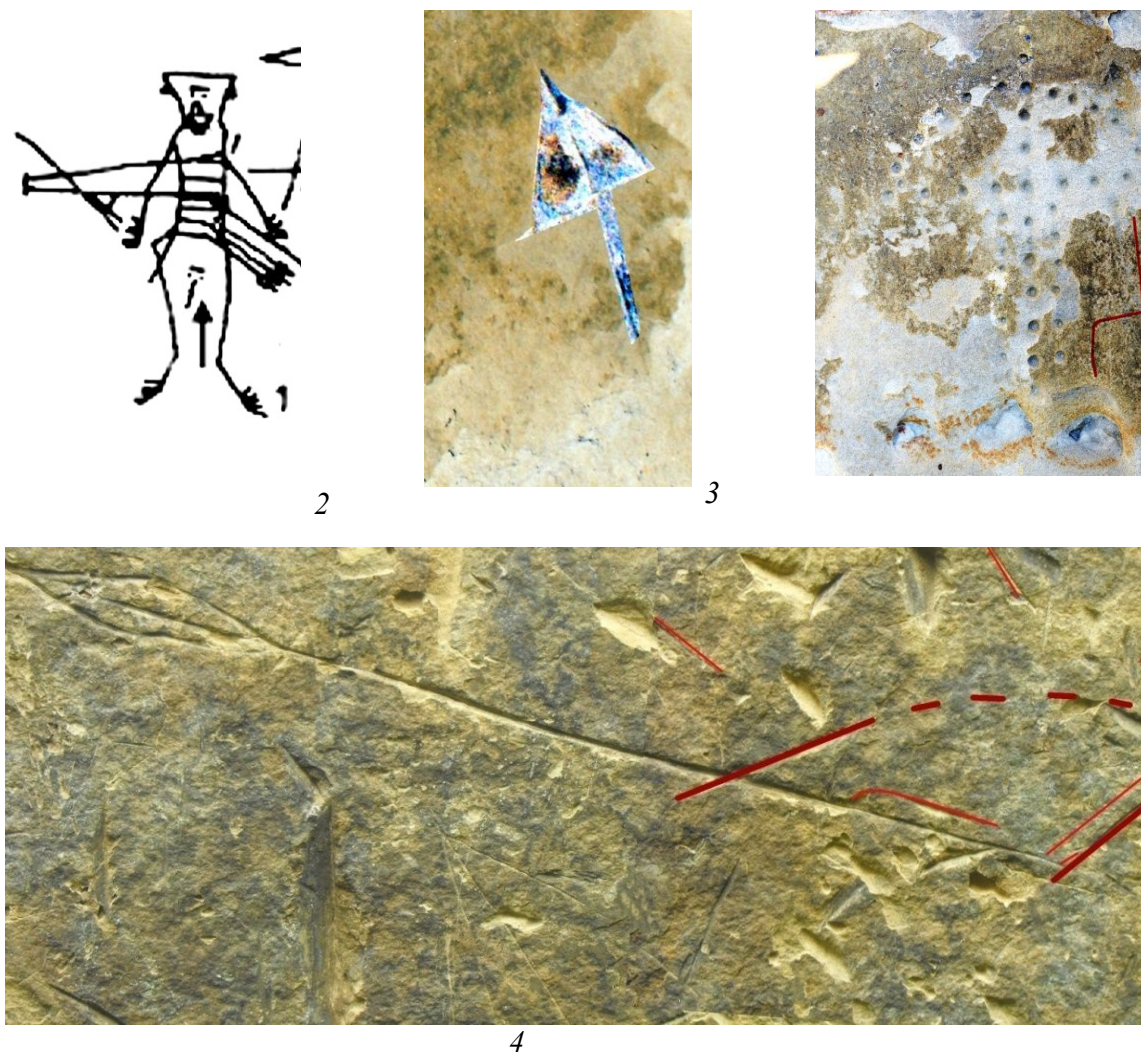


Fig. 35. Bows and arrows: 1, Auvent de Chevalier; 2-3, Someș Cliffs – The Cliff of La Împușcați; 4, Area IV.

The arrow or spear with a flint tip used to have a propulsion or throwing system at the tail. This type of weapon is pictured with a hunter (fig. 35/1), where it is used as a bow. The same hunter shows us how arrows

⁵⁷ *** IstRom 1960, 28.

⁵⁸ Mellart 1975, 49, fig. 103.

and other weapons are kept⁵⁹. Some of these images are found among the so-called abstract signs (fig. 35/1), as it is difficult to establish exactly if they indicate a weapon or a sign.

Other bows are pictured at the Someș Cliffs (fig. 35/2-3), some made through the pointing techniques, and could possibly be dated later (fig. 35/3). There are no analogies for these, but this area also has not been catalogued, so we cannot make a correlation with the other engravings from there.

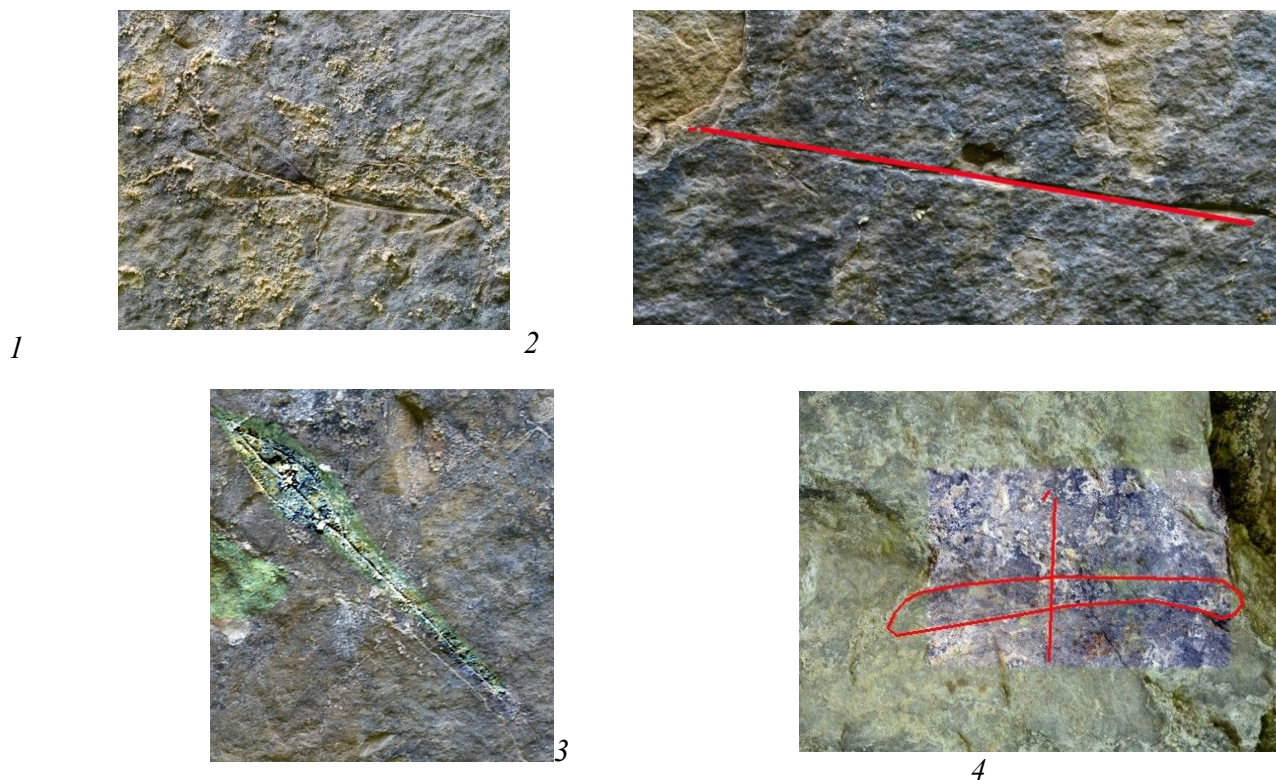


Fig. 36. 1, Arrow with tail feathers (Rus 1-2,4-5 Area IV); 2, arrow/spear with a thick tip; 3. *Auvent de chevalier* Essone.

⁵⁹ Cărciumaru 2010, fig. 27.3.1.

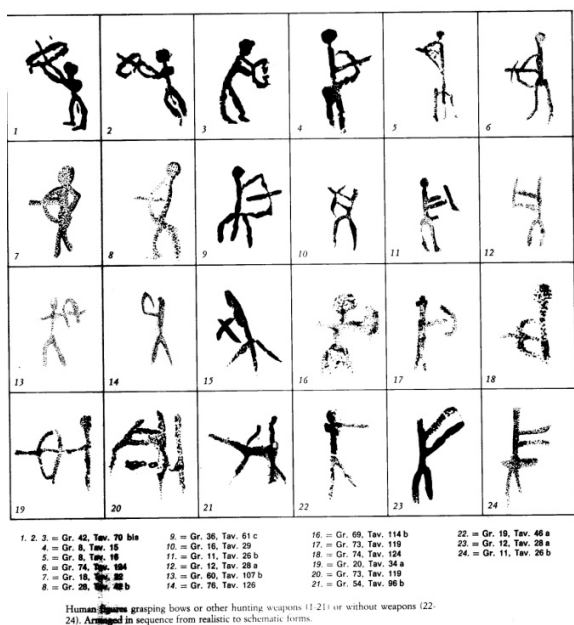


Fig. 37. Porto Badisco, according to Graziosi 1996. (fig. 35/1, 36/5, 36/1-2, 5, 9, 16). Occasionally, the bow is rendered as a crossbow (fig. D6), as it is in certain situations in our area of interest (fig. 35/2-3).

The Spear 14d, 15c, 16a3

We discussed the spear above, we will only give here several suggestive examples.



a

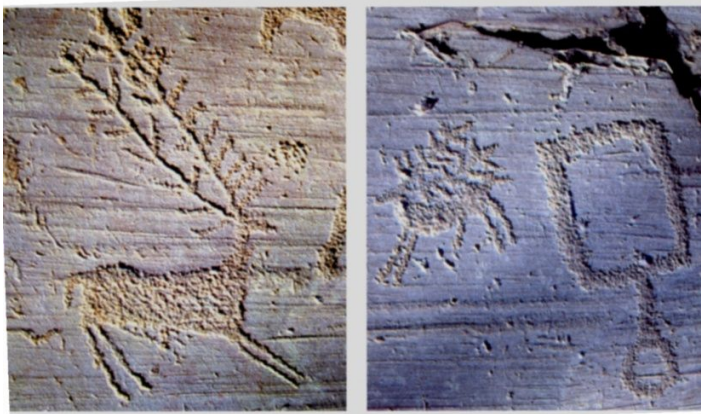
Fig. 38: a, the Killing of the stag, Valca Monica, photo Maxim Zoia.



b

b, Valca Monica rock 50, photo Maxim Zoia.

⁶⁰ Graziosi 1996, see the catalogues.



c



d



e

- c , Camonica, stag pierced by spear in the heart area; stag with broken antlers (photo Maxim Zoia);
- d, Camonica, hunters attack a giant stag (according to Anati 1961, 29);
- e, the killing or riding of the stag, he4_kefra (apud Van Berg d26).

The enclosure

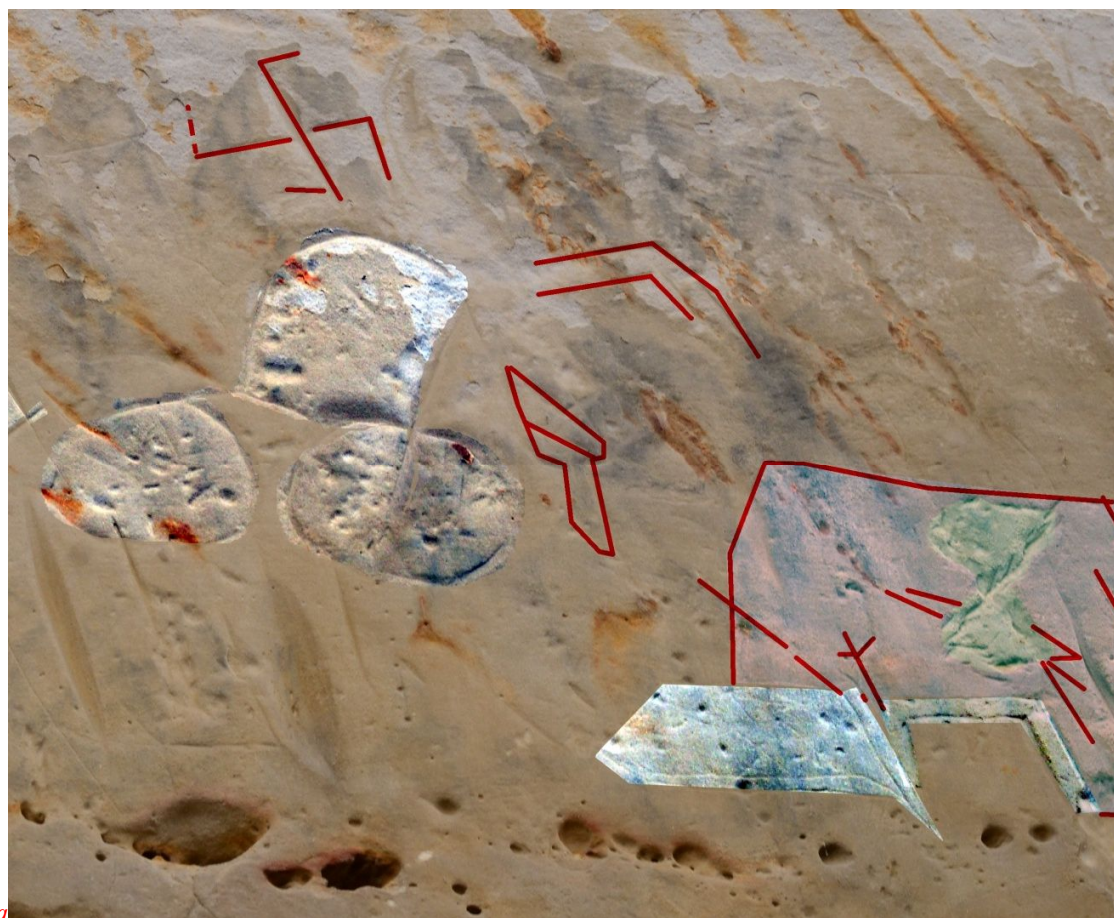


Fig. 39. The enclosures from Khi-Kit, according to Van Berg P.L. WEB, fig. 1.

The presence of several enclosures on *the Hunters Pannel* reminds us of the discovery at Khi-Kit of certain stones with fences, considered to be the base for fences made of palisades or for nets (fig. 39b).

Chronology

In this stage of our research, we cannot give and have no means to give a more exact dating. At the same time we must recognize that, in many cases, rock art dating is debateable. The presence of several stages causes us to think that the communities that initially began rock art at Cuciulat also continued to produce rock art later. In the area of the Someș Cliffs, rock art begins at the end of the Paleolithic and continues up to the Mesolithic. As we mentioned earlier, the first level from Perii Vadului belongs to the Mousterian, presenting artefacts made in the Levallois technique; the second level may belong to the early Gravettian – we do not exclude the possibility that some pieces are neolithic.

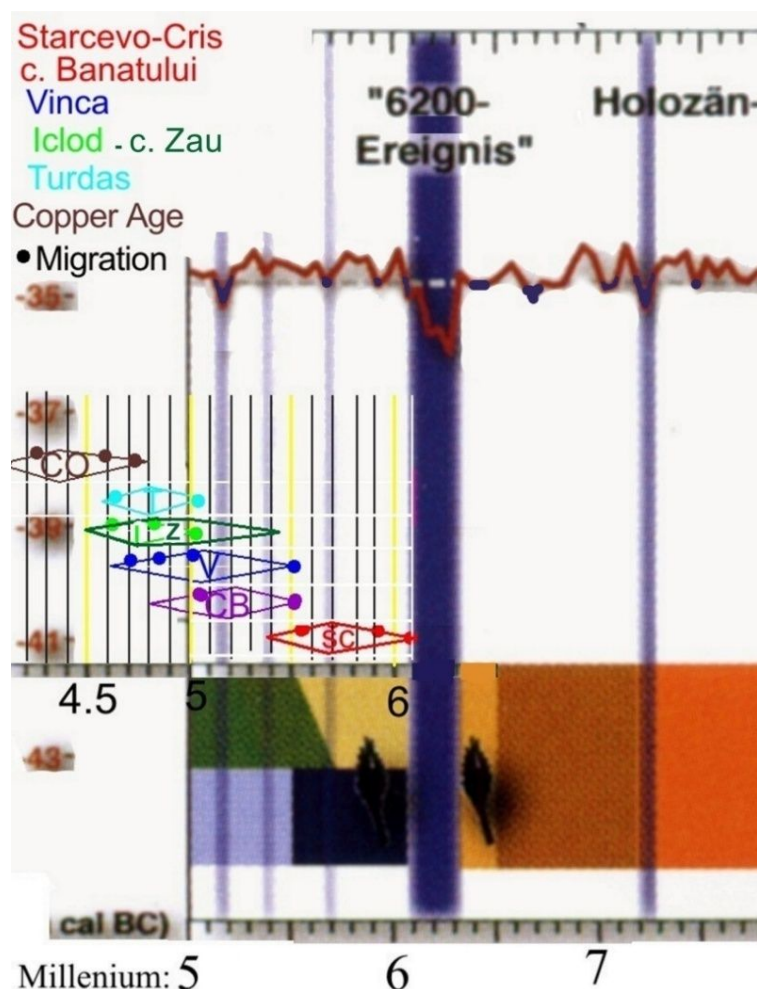


Fig. 40. Climate changes in centuries 8-5 BC.

between these and the rock art.

During all this time, as well as later in the Neolithic, there were a series of climate changes, as shown by the pollen analyses of Marin Cărciumaru⁶¹. We have a series of tests done by Daim and Neubauer⁶² for the Mesolithic, Neolithic and the Bronze Age, starting in the Holocene, to which we added various cases from the civilizations of the Neolithic Era and the Bronze Age (fig. 40).

However, in our Neolithic there are no rock art monuments which we can say for certain belong there. At Baciul, on a ceramic fragment (mentioned by M. Roska, but lost today) there is an incised bull. It is very possible that some of the rock art engravings from the Someș Cliffs do indeed belong to the Neolithic. Below is a list of the archeological discoveries in the area, without it being possible to make a direct connection

⁶¹ Cărciumaru 1980, 236 sqq.

⁶² Daim, Neubauer 2005, Abb. 5.

Annex

In the area of Rus village (Sălaj county), comprising the villages of Rus, Buzaș and Fîntînele-Rus, there are mentions of:

- the *Citera* site (c). On the peak of the tall mound, situated West of the village, there weren't any „interesting things” discovered, from an archeological point of view (?), Bibliography: Luca, Gudea 2010.
- the *La Văgăuni* site is considered to show „interesting” places (in our sites, Rus I – 6 there are numerous rock art signs, niches, altars and so on). Bibliography: Luca, Gudea 2010, under Buzaș-Rus.

1. Archeological sites with complex stratigraphy:

a) the site *Șesul lui Măican*, Rus village. In a garden facing Buzaș (house numbers 104-108) atypical, prehistorical fragments were discovered (but also fragments belonging to the Suciu de Sus culture), as well as pre-feudal ceramics: Bibliography: Luca, Gudea 2010, 97.

2. Prehistoric discoveries

a) without further details, the bibliography mentions ceramic fragments belonging to the Coțofeni culture. Bibliography: Bejinariu 2005d, 65;

b) the site *Cetatea Pintii*. North-West of the village there is a neolithic or bronze age settlement. Bibliography: Luca, Gudea 2010, under Buzaș-Rus, 35, 97.

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RITUAL, MEANING AND MORAL ORDER. SOCIAL AND SYMBOLIC SIGNIFICANCE OF COPPER ARTIFACTS. A CASE STUDY OF AN EARLY ENEOLITHIC SETTLEMENT IN POLAND

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Key words: *Robert Wuthnow, cultural analysis, Eneolithic, copper artifacts, ritual, moral order, ideology, Brześć Kujawski culture*

Abstract

The aim of the article is to present an outline of Robert Wuthnow's theory of cultural analysis and its usefulness for reconstruction of the socio-political and cultural events in prehistoric archeology and especially in studies of cultures with the oldest copper artifacts. The paper also discusses the basic concepts of the theory of cultural analysis: moral order, uncertainty, rituals and ritual activity, ideology and ideological movements and institutions. Finally, a case of an Early Eneolithic settlement of Brześć Kujawski culture (BKC) at Osłonki and some other examples of archaeological analyses are shown, in which Robert Wuthnow's theory was effectively applied.

Introduction

Often it is stressed that the concept of ritual did the great career in anthropological sciences. It became the subject of study in sociology, teatrology, psychology and psychiatry, history of religion and even zoology, ethology and philosophy¹.

In this article I'm not going to define the concept of ritual. In many specialized publications one can see a great variety of definitions of the ritual concepts that are formulated according to scientific discipline, specific research schools and individual attitudes of many researchers.

Robert Wuthnow distinguishes four basic trends of research in which different ways of social studies (including the ritual) are implemented. Among these approaches are: (1) classical (2) neoclassical (3) poststructuralist and (4) this which disregard the question of meaning².

¹ Tokarska-Bakir 2010, 9.

² Wuthnow 1987, 18-65.

The purpose of this paper is to outline the possible benefits inherent in the Wuthnow's theory of cultural analysis. It allows you to expand the field of ritual studies in archeology and detach them from the imperative of reconstructing the meanings of investigated rituals. As an example of the efficiency of studies using the Wuthnow's theory is the analysis of the collapse of an Early Eneolithic settlement at Osłonki of Brześć Kujawski culture in northern part of Poland.

Ritual

Archaeological studies of power and authority, as well as social issues in prehistory, are usually based on analyses of burial rites³. This is because all rituals, including burial rites, provide a flow of meaning in culture, in this case through essential material things⁴. This is very important because archaeology, as we all know, is focused on exploring material traces of human activity in the past, mainly things (artefacts).

Ritual is associated mainly with conventionalized religious and social cultural practices⁵. It was particularly important in preliterate cultures⁶, where it was subject to historical changes and thus provided evidence. Moreover, changes in ritual indicated very clearly significant changes in power⁷. An important feature of every rite was that it was encoded by people who were not its performers⁸.

These characteristics of ritual, drawn from recent studies of various scientific disciplines (cultural anthropology, history, psychology, religious studies, sociology), show how much cognitive potential there is in the analysis of various contexts, for example in context of power, and more⁹.

On the other hand, these features of ritual highlight once again the need to carry out research from many perspectives and in an interdisciplinary way. Successful study of power and authority based on burial rites is clearly dependent on the theoretical perspective adopted, especially on the accepted view of culture¹⁰.

The normative approach to archaeological culture proposed by Gustaf Kossinna¹¹ and Gordon Childe¹², the founding fathers of culture-historical archaeology, derives from two assumptions. Firstly,

³ e.g. Biehl, Marciniak 2000; Chapman, Higham, Slavchev, Gaydarska, Honch 2006; Kadrow 2006, 138.

⁴ Barański 2007, 112; Althoff 2011, 11.

⁵ Barański 2007, 113; Kaczmarek 2006, 122–126; Rappaport 2007, 52.

⁶ Assmann 2008, 34.

⁷ Althoff 2011, 183, 184.

⁸ Rappaport 2007, 62–87.

⁹ Kadrow 2011, 19.

¹⁰ Kadrow 2011, 19.

¹¹ Kossinna 1911.

¹² Childe 1929.

artefacts are an expression of cultural norms; secondly, the sets of norms define precisely what culture is. This is the way traditional archaeologists understand both archaeological culture and culture in general¹³. In this perspective, archaeological cultures are identified as real historical entities whose appearance, development and disappearance followed one after another according to the rules and mechanisms of history¹⁴.

Emil Mühlmann wrote: “Viele Einheiten von Naturvölkern, mit denen der Ethnologe operiert, sind einfach forschungspraktische Klassifikationen auf Grund von kulturellen oder sprachlichen Kriterien, ohne daß die darunter subsumierten Bevölkerungen ein Bewußtsein der Zusammengehörigkeit hätten”¹⁵.

This approach to culture should be abandoned in favour of research on units of live culture really existing in prehistory. One such unit with undoubted real existence is a group inhabiting one settlement and probably one settlement microregion. A village community certainly constituted an ethnic group as well, i.e. a group aware of its cultural, political and language identity, seeking to maintain and cultivate that identity. In archaeological analysis, families and village (local) groups are reflected in households and settlements or settlement microregions¹⁶.

Paleosociological study requires appropriate models and theories of the sociocultural process which are not based on the metaphorical view of society as a biological organism, as accepted in classical sociology, systems sociology and theories derived from them¹⁷. An appropriate approach should be of historical nature, cover a diachronic perspective and involve models describing culture and society in suitable terms.

Robert Wuthnow’s theory of cultural analysis seems potentially the most effective tool in research on rebellion, primarily due to the key role it ascribes to ritual¹⁸, an element which is also important in archaeology. Because of this characteristics, Wuthnow’s theory helps to move more freely between sociological theory and archaeological research.

Since power relations had a great significance in prehistoric societies¹⁹, it is also worth mentioning Max Weber’s typology of authority, especially his description of charismatic authority²⁰.

¹³ Johnson 2010, 17, 18.

¹⁴ Kadrow 2011, 19.

¹⁵ Mühlmann 1954, 165.

¹⁶ Behrens 1976; Kadrow 1994.

¹⁷ Sztompka 2007, 19–22; Kadrow 2011.

¹⁸ Wuthnow 1987.

¹⁹ cf. Habermas 1983, 492.

Wuthnow's theory of cultural analysis

Robert Wuthnow's theory of cultural analysis is considered as a part of the tradition of French structuralism. It combines the heritage of structuralism with dramaturgic analysis and institutional approach²¹.

Wuthnow proposed a model of cultural structure whose central point is moral order, ritual and ideology with their symbols in the institutional context. Mutual interactions and the relationship between these elements of cultural structure determine the dynamics of moral order and, simultaneously, culture itself and social structure²².

The primary source of sociocultural dynamics is a gap between the programme and the actual implementation of moral order²³. When there is uncertainty about the use of certain communication and ritual practices, social situations and social relations are ambiguous and unpredictable. Uncertainty increases the intensity of ritual practices and produces new ideologies that compete with one another. To achieve their objectives, they have to take an institutional form²⁴.

One of the most essential components of moral order is a moral code, viewed as "a set of cultural elements that define the nature of commitment to a particular course of behaviour. These elements have an identifiable symbolic structure"²⁵. The theory of cultural analysis defines some other useful ideas. Order is described as something that makes distinctions, symbolic demarcations (boundaries), so we know the place of things and the way they relate to one another. A symbol is something that expresses those boundaries, while structure "means that some symbolic distinction can be identified"²⁶. In this theory, cultural constructions are seen as codes, and not simply as subjective meanings, consisting of material symbols structured by the boundaries between moral order and the real programme. Any erosion of those boundaries causes potential crisis of moral authority and intensifies ritual practices²⁷, leading ultimately to sociocultural change.

²⁰ Weber 2002, 181–192; Kadrow 2008a, 193–194.

²¹ Turner 2004, 585–603.

²² Turner 2004, 586–593.

²³ cf. also the idea of promoted and accepted patterns of social behaviour in Ossowska 2000, 11–15.

²⁴ Turner 2004, 591–593.

²⁵ Wuthnow 1987, 66.

²⁶ Wuthnow 1987, 69–70.

²⁷ Wuthnow 1987, 75.

Rituals are very important with this method of cultural analysis, also because they are relatively easy to identify archaeologically. They regulate and define social relations. Rituals indicate the boundaries between social statuses (rites of passage). They also serve to remind people about the relations they share and the principles underlying those relations (ceremonies) or to send signals defining positions and relations in social activities (etiquette, protocol²⁸).

As a symbolic and expressive aspect of behaviour that communicates social relations, often with a formal or otherwise dramatized structure, ritual effectively diagnoses crisis situations. It provides a way to deal with uncertainty²⁹.

Moments of discrepancy between moral order and the real programme are inherent in culture. They are a source of sociocultural crises which generate intensification of ritual activities and invoke moral responsibility to act and reinforce moral order at the same time³⁰. Unlike Marxists and many other researchers, Wuthnow does not accept deprivation (economic distress, alienation, anomie, anxiety etc.) as a primary casual factor in the emergence of new ideological movements causing sociocultural changes³¹.

Moral order is also dramatized by ideology, which can be defined as a set of verbal or written utterances with capacity for cognitive manipulation. For this reason, ideology serves as a method of defining and communicating the essence of moral obligations³².

There is usually a variety of ideologies, including programmes to assume power. Ideologies arise and are distributed under relevant social movements, and they are related to the social environment. Changes in the social environment that affect moral order are linked directly to changes in ideologies. "Moral order is posited as the mediating condition between ideology and social structure"³³.

There are three phases in the relationship between ideology and moral order: (1) phase of production, marked by the emergence of new ideological movements resulting from disturbances in moral order; (2) phase of selection, when ideologies compete to provide acceptable moral obligations; (3) phase of institutionalization, when the winning ideology takes a form more resistant to further

²⁸ Wuthnow 1987, 107.

²⁹ Wuthnow 1987, 109; cf. also Althoff 2011, 23.

³⁰ Wuthnow 1987, 120–124.

³¹ Wuthnow 1987, 152–154.

³² Wuthnow 1987, 145.

³³ Wuthnow 1987, 150.

competition and to alterations in the social environment³⁴. When ideology becomes an institution, it requires developing a stable means of securing resources and internal structure, some degree of legitimacy and sufficient independence from other institutions to pursue its goals³⁵.

New ideologies arise in the framework of social, religious and political movements, and innovative sets of symbols and rituals play there an important role. Change in moral order is an easy opportunity for ideological innovations. “Any disturbance of social resources that results in uncertainties about the nature of moral obligations is likely to result in some modification at the level of ideology itself”³⁶. Disturbances in that area give an opportunity to introduce new symbols for interpretation of what the moral order should consist of. The ability to use the opportunity depends on the presence of respected leaders and on their capacity to generate recruits³⁷.

Sometimes, new uncertainties caused by disturbances in moral order are added. This may be due to the emergence of “new players”, “new rules” or “new games”. “Uncertainties in moral order provide possibilities for new ideologies to be produced. These possibilities are probably necessary but are undoubtedly insufficient in themselves for predicting the occurrence of specific ideological movements”³⁸.

In the situation of cultural, political or economic diversity, multiple ideological responses are possible. Competing ideological movements usually adopt specific symbolic markers to set each movement apart from its competitors and to be easily identifiable among other movements³⁹.

In conclusion, it is worth repeating that (1) the social role of ritual consists in communication; (2) rituals tend to be orchestrated according to pre-established norms; (3) rituals and ideology go together and articulate moral order; (4) ritual enacts ideas uttered verbally or in writing; (5) “rituals are generated in much the same manner as other ideological systems; both are likely to appear in situations of uncertainty in the moral order and help to clarify moral obligations constituting that order”; (6) “uncertainty in the moral order generates oppositional ideological movements that sponsor their own rituals”⁴⁰.

³⁴ Wuthnow 1987, 151.

³⁵ Wuthnow 1987, 169.

³⁶ Wuthnow 1987, 154.

³⁷ Wuthnow 1987, 155.

³⁸ Wuthnow 1987, 158.

³⁹ Wuthnow 1987, 159–160.

⁴⁰ Wuthnow 1987, 170.

Wuthnow's theory may usefully be supplemented with Chalmers Johnson's cultural model of causes of dysfunction in society⁴¹, the dysfunction resulting from a disequibrated social value system (moral order in Wuthnow's terminology). Johnson names four main sources of dysfunction⁴²:

1) exogenous value changes, introduced from outside the system, e.g. influence exerted by the French Revolution or the Bolshevik Revolution on other societies; Christian missions, and the activity of communist parties. These factors contribute to transformations in the value system of a given society, thereby lowering its adaptive and integration abilities.

2) endogenous value changes, internally induced, e.g. conflict between Church and State in the Middle Ages, and new outlooks forming in a given society. Such factors tend to weaken the current value system.

3) exogenous environmental changes, introduced from outside the system. These social factors, e.g. conquest of a given society, necessitate changes in the structure of the accepted value system, and lack of an appropriate value change gives rise to social crisis.

4) endogenous environmental changes, internally induced, e.g. growing popularity of a technological innovation or new methods of production. These factors make it necessary for the current value system to adapt to changing conditions, and lack of such adaptation gives rise to social crisis.

The destabilising factors, leading to social disequilibrium, prevent the social system from fulfilling its essential functions and necessitate alterations in the accepted value system. Rebellion or revolution break out when the level of dysfunctions exceeds the system's adaptive abilities and when the ruling elite opposes any change. In such circumstances, an alternative value system develops in society. However, the revolutionary situation still requires a complement, an "accelerator", e.g. defeat in a war, the rise of a charismatic leader or organisation of a revolutionary party⁴³.

What has happened at about 4300 BC at Osłonki settlement of Brześć Kujawski culture in the light of archaeological interpretation?

In the chapter „*The Late Phase ca. 4300-4100 BC: Collapse of the Social and Economic System of the Brześć Kujawski Group...*” Ryszard Grygiel wrote: „It is difficult to determine the direct cause of the great catastrophe that occurred around 4300 BC. At the time, in the whole Brześć Kujawski and

⁴¹ Johnson 1982.

⁴² after Brzechczyn 2007.

Oślonki region, there was a sudden event, whose trace above all is the evidence for numerous fires, as seen at all sites of the Brześć Kujawski Culture (BKC) in the construction of the trapezoidal houses”⁴⁴. It seems that all dwellings were destroyed at one time. This refers to the houses on the central settlements and satellite ones. This happened when the central settlements reached their greatest territorial range and when they were inhabited by the greatest number of inhabitants. Numerous discoveries, especially at Oślonki (Fig. 1), convince that enemies could surprise people who inhabited a settlement, which was not fortified at this time. At the moment of attack probably only women, children and old people lived in the Oślonki settlement⁴⁵.

Some of the evidences are particularly important in this context. Grave No LXXIII at Oślonki contained a woman and two children which were killed⁴⁶. Skulls of woman and older child had traces of injury made with hard and sharp tool, perhaps an antler axe⁴⁷. The mentioned above grave was located near burnt houses 23 and 26 and pit 248. Inside this pit a vessel with traces of food (meat and mugwort - *Artemisia*) was discovered. Perhaps an attack took place when a meal was prepared by inhabitants⁴⁸. „The discovery of a large amount of charred wheat in the cellar of house 23 (Fig. 549), whose bedding trenches contained a continuous layer of burnt daub, suggests that this event took place after the harvest, thus in the late summer or fall”⁴⁹. Attacker, who used antler axes to kill people, came probably from the outskirts of BKC. As the other side of the conflict served people from central settlements at Oślonki and Brześć Kujawski.

Attacks and destructions had very serious consequences for the whole Oślonki and Brześć Kujawski settlement microregions of this culture. After attack both central settlements (Oślonki and Brześć Kujawski) returned to function. But many of satellite settlements and some smaller cemeteries were completely abandoned. At the same time inhabitants began to build fortifications on both central settlements. They consisted of ditches and wooden palisades⁵⁰. Only a few houses continued in use. Most of them were rebuilt, repaired or reconstructed. Some crafts continued (for example working of

⁴³ Brzechczyn 2007, 41–44.

⁴⁴ Grygiel 2008, 1942.

⁴⁵ Grygiel 2008, 1942.

⁴⁶ Grygiel 2008, Fig. 837.

⁴⁷ Grygiel 2008, Figs. 1389-1393.

⁴⁸ Grygiel 2008, 1943.

⁴⁹ Grygiel 2008, 1943.

⁵⁰ Grygiel 2008, 1943; Figs. 615-616.

antler and bone), but import of copper and its metallurgy (Fig. 2) completely stopped. Also imported chocolate and Jurassic flint were replaced by local erratic one. Only amber continued to arrive⁵¹.

Richly decorated bone ornaments⁵² also completely disappeared and were replaced by simple specimens. Profound changes appeared in burial rituals. From that moment dominated burials with skeletons laying straight on its back with head oriented to the south, instead of gender differentiated burials with bodies deposited in graves in contracted positions: men on the right side and women on the left side. The traditional burial rite of Brześć Kujawski culture reminds the rites of Lublin-Volhynia culture in SE Poland and Tiszapolgar-Bodrogkeresztur complex in Carpathian Basin⁵³. However, new burial rite after attacks was similar to burial customs of the Globular Amphorae culture⁵⁴. Usually graves of the new rite were deprived of equipment and skeletons are discovered in various kind of pits, including rubbish and storage pits. Animal graves appeared for the first time in addition to the human graves⁵⁵.

Most likely as a result of internal social conflicts (rebellion) taking place in the verge of the classic and late phases, the communities of the BKC underwent very serious transformation. They are perceptible in many aspects of the material culture and funeral rite. Central settlements became fortified at that time. Gender-differentiated rules for burial rite vanished. Animal burials appeared. A process of change of pottery forms and technology began, and its capstone was the emergence of the earliest phases of the Globular Amphora culture⁵⁶.

Ryszard Grygiel believes that above mentioned rebellion „may be connected with the infiltration of the core population in the Osłonki region (Fig. 1) by foreign ethnic group, which as a result on palaeodiet and social palaeostratigraphy can be identified as groups with a different subsistence strategy, generally pastoral”⁵⁷.

Events at Osłonki settlement in the light of Wuthnow's theory of cultural analysis

The roots of the events described above, i.e. the rebellion resulting in destruction of the settlement in Osłonki and another settlement in Brześć Kujawski, may be found in phases I and II of

⁵¹ Grygiel 2008, 1944.

⁵² cf. Grygiel 2008, Fig. 1450.

⁵³ cf. Kadrow 2008b; Kadrow 2009.

⁵⁴ Grygiel 2008, 1944.

⁵⁵ Grygiel 2008, 1944.

⁵⁶ Czerniak 1994; Grygiel 2008.

the BKC. The formation period of the BKC (phase I) has left abundant data about the origin of the main significant components of the cultural tradition followed by the communities inhabiting both settlements, while the classic period (phase II) has provided us with information on the cultural mechanisms stabilising the complex socio-political system of the BKC communities in their peak development.

According to numerous studies based on analysis of isotopes of strontium ($^{87}\text{Sr}/^{86}\text{Sr}$), migrations and moves of small human groups⁵⁷ or individuals (e.g. famous Ötzi) were a typical element of behaviour in prehistoric communities. The absence of members of other human groups infiltrating a given community⁵⁸ seems quite extraordinary, and analyses which confirm that absence are considered to be rather unreliable⁶⁰. Infiltration of that kind, however, should not be equated with great migrations, or with conquests that often accompanied them, which were typical of the early civilisations with developed state structures.

In the light of the reconstruction made by Ryszard Grygiel the population of the BKC appeared in the region of Brześć Kujawski and Osłonki as another wave of settlers in the middle of the 5th millennium BC. Inhabiting the same sites that had previously been populated by the people of the Linear Band Pottery culture (Lbk), evidences the continuation of the same economic patterns by the settlers of the BKC.

These groups reached Kuyavia via Greater Poland from the south-west (Silesia) and from the west (from the area of Saale and Elbe in central Germany). In latter region lived the communities of the IV phase of the Stroke-Ornamented Pottery culture (post-Lbk) and contemporaneous phase of the Rössen culture. At that time, they were subject to quite strong influences of the Lengyel culture. The mentioned small groups of migrants brought with them the material culture with the characteristics of these three cultural groups ("stroke-ornamented" (post-Lbk) + "Rössen" + "Lengyel").

Probably shortly after the first wave of immigration came the next settlers whose presence manifests itself by the Góra group style. Hence, the process of the genesis of the BKC was autochthonous and based on a gradual fusion of the late elements of the Post-Linear Band Pottery culture, with younger elements of the Góra group joining them later⁶¹.

⁵⁷ Grygiel 2008, 1944.

⁵⁸ e.g. Pokutta 2014.

⁵⁹ cf. Oelze *et al.* 2011.

⁶⁰ Pokutta 2013, 248–249.

⁶¹ Grygiel 2008.

In the first phase of the BKC all of its basic features had developed - pottery, forms of tools and ornaments. In the beginnings raw flint materials were still imported (Jurassic and chocolate flints). This was later completely abandoned and flint production became dependent on local Baltic flint⁶².

The most important element determining the integrity and distinctiveness of the BKC was its socio-economic organization, founded on the idea of a settlement consisting of solid trapezoid houses. Their concept came from the "Stroke-Ornamented (post-Lbk) - Rössen" environment, where one can trace their full evolution.

The original, local "invention" was a homestead (house with a yard), where the dead were buried. The already mentioned import of copper products (in the II phase) from the south-western groups of the Lengyel culture - through the Jordanów culture - adds to the particular image of the BKC⁶³.

As perceived by Lech Czerniak⁶⁴ the colonization of Kuyavia, was extended in time and was taking place mainly in the period of the Lbk culture. It was completed as late as at the beginning of the post-Lbk horizon. It is not possible to speak about settlement hiatus between those cultural phenomena. Specific cultural feature of Kuyavia in the form of the BKC was shaped in a continuous and long process. Reorganization and change in relations between various cultural centres was of crucial importance. The dominant place of the affiliations with Lesser Poland during the Lbk in the later stage was taken over by the connections with Silesia and with the central Germany, where western Stroke-Ornamented (post-Lbk) - Rössen complex dominated⁶⁵.

Irrespective of whether the foundations of the BKC communities were formed west of the Oder as a result of creative fusion of post-Lbk+Rössen+Lengyel elements⁶⁶ or in Kuyavia as a result of synthesis of various cultural components: Lbk+post-LBK+ Rössen+Lengyel and Malice from Małopolska⁶⁷, the main mechanism generating the early BKC consisted in successive ideologies which synthesised different foreign cultural traditions and were brought about by competing ideological movements. Before the BKC and in its beginnings, the movements had not undergone institutionalisation, and thus they tended to be impermanent and changeable.

⁶² Grygiel 2008.

⁶³ Grygiel 2008.

⁶⁴ Czerniak 1980; 1994.

⁶⁵ Czerniak 1994.

⁶⁶ cf. Grygiel 2008.

⁶⁷ cf. Czerniak 1980; 1994.

In archaeological material, the situation is reflected by dynamic changes, random at first, discernible e.g. in the style of ceramics. At the beginning and in the early phase of the BKC, the part of the population that formed an ideological movement promoting ideological synthesis of various cultural traditions (conservative and Neolithic in nature, as shown by longhouses, extended families living in trapezoidal houses as the main form of social organisation, burials at house yards, certain elements of ceramics and of progressive, quite Eneolithic traditions characterised by gender-diversified funeral rites, and by a sudden increase in the production of symbolic or prestige goods – cf. Fig. 2) won against other movements that supported cultural particularisms (Lbk+Rössen+Lengyel+Polgar+Malice-Góra etc.).

The competition was won by those human groups who formed ideological movements reflecting the spirit of the new period, the Eneolithic, with its more complex social structure which included some elements of hierarchy. This is discernible in the organisation of central settlements surrounded with satellites and in the fact that the production, use and deposition of symbolic or prestige goods (Fig. 2), as well as the ritualization of everyday life, focused on the central settlements (e.g. Site 1 in Osłonki, Site 4 in Brześć Kujawski), while the satellite settlements were mostly concerned with food acquisition and production, i.e. agriculture and animal husbandry.

The moral order which stabilised the complex forms of social life in the classic phase of the BKC was supported by a great sociocultural effort, as evidenced by the intensity of a wide range of unified ritual activities. The activities, which legitimised and enforced the sociocultural *status quo*, must have been organised by social groups (extended families) who benefited from them, such as the inhabitants of the two central settlements.

The synthesis of various ideologies and cultural traditions required symbolic justification, while the human groups who promoted the synthesis and its moral order needed their existence and activity to be institutionalised and legitimised. The new moral order, typical of the classic BKC, was stabilised with exceptionally intensive rituals, which have left their traces in the archaeological material. The intensification of the symbolic activities and the ritualization of everyday life point indirectly to the strength of particularistic decentralist tendencies still noticeable in the communities inhabiting the central or satellite settlements. They also show that the moral order of the classic BKC engendered some unrest, which is known to be a necessary though insufficient condition for crisis, e.g. internal conflict or rebellion. Moreover, the archaeological material suggests that the new social structure, a

unique original sociocultural experiment, took unstable forms which were not rooted in the cultural memory of the communities.

The diversity of the cultural traditions making up the moral order and the untried novel social structure with its beginnings of hierarchy heralded inevitable internal social conflict.

The insular character of Eneolithic settlement in a sea of conservative Neolithic communities, as well as the symptoms of social tensions described above, increased the probability of reaction and return to the egalitarian forms of sociocultural life. This led to the emergence of culturally new communities, known as the Globular Amphora culture. Dissociating themselves from their cultural background, i.e. the BKC, the communities rejected almost all elements of material culture with a symbolic meaning that had been accepted till then, such as trapezoidal houses, social structures, funeral rites, the production of prestige goods and the beginnings of social hierarchy, and the only traces of continuity can be found in certain traits of settlement and the technology of ceramics. The post-BKC communities evolved their own moral order, based on the original local ideology of the oldest phase of the GAC, identifiable in a modest collection of artefacts which, however, show no suggested eastern references.

Conclusions

Wuthnow's theory of cultural analysis has not been too often used in archaeological studies. For its anticipation on the basis of archaeological studies should be considered opinion of Taras Tkachuk and Jaroslav Melnik about the correlation of intensification of ornamentation on the late phase Trypillian culture pottery (often associated with the intensification of ritual practices) with a progressive crisis of that culture⁶⁸.

As a second example can serve an article of Justyna Baron (2012), who presented an interpretation of changes in rituals against the background of the political and socio-cultural transformation in Poland in the early Middle Ages. Studies on the remains of cult activities recorded in this period of time showed that some of them appeared as late as 11th-12th centuries, that is after the official radical actions undertaken against pagan religion. The intensification of these rituals (mainly

⁶⁸ Tkachuk, Melnik 2000, 215-226.

foundation sacrifices) was interpreted as factors of pagan identity in confrontation with Christianity⁶⁹. In her study Baron consciously refers to the Wuthnow's theory of cultural analysis⁷⁰.

In one of my recent articles I have also applied Wuthnow's theory to the study of some selected political events in prehistory. I tried there to clarify what happened at the Babia Góra settlement complex in Iwanowice ca. 2050 BC, when a part of the local settlement was replaced with a cemetery and when vessels ceased to be ornamented with cord impressions⁷¹. Then I asked if the sudden change in land development was caused by a rebellion? To answer this question I defined the notion of rebellion, drawing on various theories of conflict, and the notion of moral order, ritual and ideology, the key concepts in Robert Wuthnow's theory of cultural analysis⁷². The article also returned to the previously established sequence of events in the settlement complex and then reconstructed and described them in terms of the above mentioned sociological theory⁷³.

Reconstruction of socio-cultural phenomena made this article and in above mentioned paper and an attempt at understanding them in terms of nonconscious processes and social structures show the effectiveness of one of numerous sociological theories, namely Robert Wuthnow's theory of cultural analysis⁷⁴. The theory seems particularly useful in archaeological research since it posits a key role of ritual in identifying the processes which stabilise a given community. Wuthnow does not attempt to clarify the meanings of individual acts of communication carried out through rituals. From his perspective, the sociocultural context of use and the function of ritual is more important than its semantic meaning.

The isolated cases of rebellion in the Iwanowice settlement complex and inner social conflict at Ośłonki settlement provide yet another argument for rejecting an archaeological culture as an essential unit in analysing various processes and significant events, in favour of a microregion or settlement complex, which reflect the real historical unit of a community existing at the developmental stage preceding the formation of states.

It seems that the notion of an archaeological culture remains useful primarily as a classification unit in dealing with assemblages of archaeological material from a particular area and a particular period. In most cases, however, it does not represent any conscious or nonconscious prehistoric

⁶⁹ Baron 2012, 453-458.

⁷⁰ Baron 2012, 450-451.

⁷¹ cf. Kadrow 1991.

⁷² Wuthnow 1987.

⁷³ Kadrow 2016.

structures. Consequently, disputes over precise definition of this or that archaeological culture often appear rather futile. Many of them have more to do with a set of personal, institutional, ethnic or political factors affecting the archaeologists involved than with the prehistoric reality itself⁷⁵.

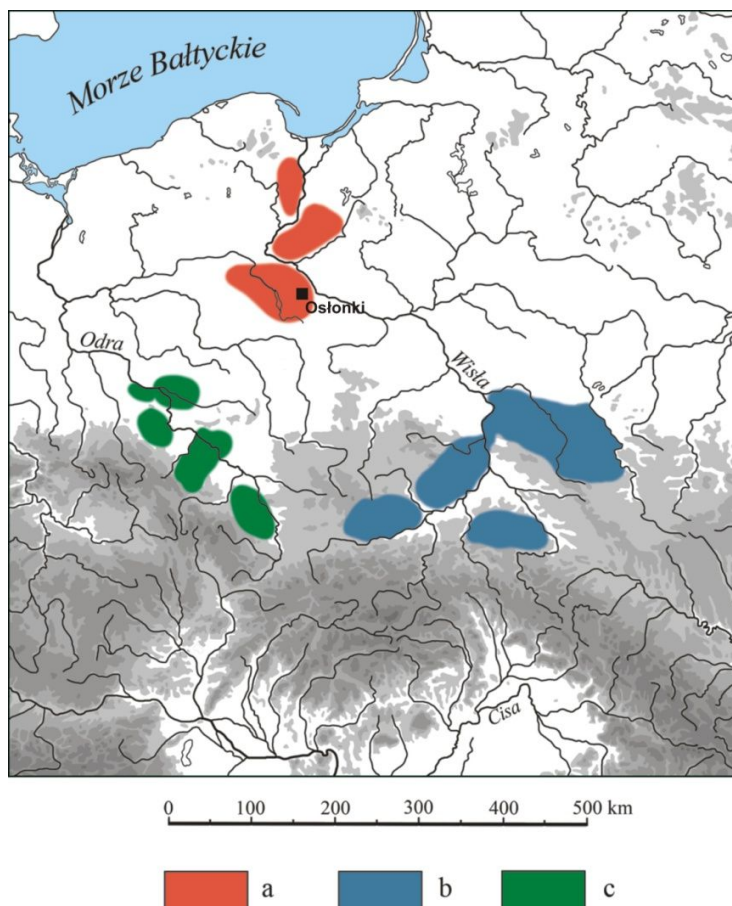


Fig. 1. Osłonki settlement on the background of the Early Eneolithic cultures in Poland; 1 – Brześć Kujawski culture, 2 – Lublin-Volhynia culture, 3 – Jordanów Śląski culture.

⁷⁴ Wuthnow 1987.

⁷⁵ cf. e.g. Kadrow 2014, 13-15.

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BUCRANIUM – SYMBOL AND SIGN

MONUMENTAL BUCRANIA. PART I

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Definitions

The term BUCRANIUM *n.* decorative pattern, ornamental motif made up from a bull head adorned with flower garlands, ribbons etc., encountered throughout the architecture of the ancient times and of the Renaissance. (< Lat. *bucranium*, Fr. *Bucrane*, Gr. *bous* “bull” and *kranion* “skull”), DEX dictionary. Some other even more complex definitions can be found in the encyclopedic dictionaries where the term given is *bucranium* (Latin): “...cut bull head”, *decorative pattern made up from the stylization of a bull head, having horns, being fleshless, sometimes adorned with floral elements or having garlands or taenia/ribbons*¹. A cognate sense, with additional information from the Mesopotamian and the Egyptian art, can be met in other encyclopedias, too². From the point of view of the prehistorians, the definitions above are quite limited, they do not cover the meaning/significance of the prehistoric objects. This significance is much larger and more complex, in connection with different situations, places, associations, all these extending the significance of the symbol and sign. However, understanding the rituals and rites connected with the bucranium and their signification is easier to grasp from the associations of symbols. The cult of the Bull, of the bucranium, of the horn represents one example of association.

¹ DEAVR 1980 v.

² *Encyclopedia AIVR*, 1994, Alexandrescu, voice, 217.

Before starting our analysis, something needs to be underlined: very often, the domestic altars imitate or reproduce in the main places, in a specific manner, the patterns from the altars of the community, sanctuaries or temples. In the secondary places they are often reproduced after the traditions and myths which were then circulating and sometimes the old traditions are kept. These cases are the embodiment of the majestic appearance of the Bull, of the horns and of the mooing/lowing.

Often, the bucranium is associated with the head of a ram or of a he-goat, enlarging or stressing the significance of this symbol (force, power, procreation³), becoming then a sign⁴. Some details of the significations related to the horn of the bull (the notion of the bull includes sometimes also the wild bull, the urus/bison, the ure ox Fig. 1a) as an element of force⁵, of divine power⁶ connected with fecundity⁷, the lowing/mooing of the bull resembling the thunder, the cornucopia/the horn of plenty and the bucranium related to the fertility, the fertility of the fertilized nature⁸, the clay pattern having the form of a horn⁹, the action of blowing in the horn¹⁰, the horns for devotion (symbolizing the founding, see below the monumental ones)¹¹ etc., have received new significations derived from the symbolism of the bull, the wild bull, the urus/bison etc.

³ For ex. *Kahti*: Rutkovski 1972, 213; Karageorghis 1977, 43; Lazarovici Gh. et alii 2001, I.1, 278-280.

⁴ For ex. at Çatal Höyük: Mellaart 1967, sanctuary EVI 7, 10, 14; extended comments at Golan 2003, 124 ff., Fig. 117.3.

⁵ Roska 1939; Chevalier, Gheerbrant 1995, bull.

⁶ Eliade 1981, 47, 48; Lazarovici Gh. et alii 2001, 278.

⁷ Anati 1970, 199.

⁸ Karageorghis 1977, 38-39.

⁹ Mantu, Dumitroaia 1997, 211, cat. 214.

¹⁰ Pichard 1948, 60-61.

¹¹ Kalicz, Raczki 1981; Lazarovici Gh. et alii 2001, I.1, 278, Fig. 255/3, 5; Șerbănescu 1997, 235-236, Fig. 2/3, 4/1; Andreescu 2002, 16, Fig. 2; pl I/2; Bem, Bălășescu 2005, 317-335, Fig. 9/1-3.



a

Fig. 1: a, La Medeleine apud Aubrier et alii 1997; b, Paleolithic bas-relief, apud Müller-Karpe 1968, I, pl. 35l, fig. 3.



b

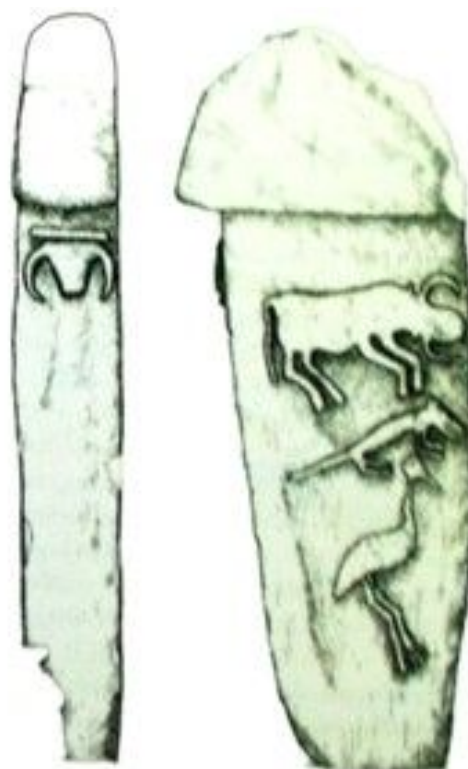


Fig. 2. Göbekli Tepe, apud Schmidt 1998, Abb.15.

The oldest and most famous representations of the bull are to be found in the French-Cantabric art, meaning the symbols on the sanctuaries from the caves, much too familiar/well-known to be mentioned here.

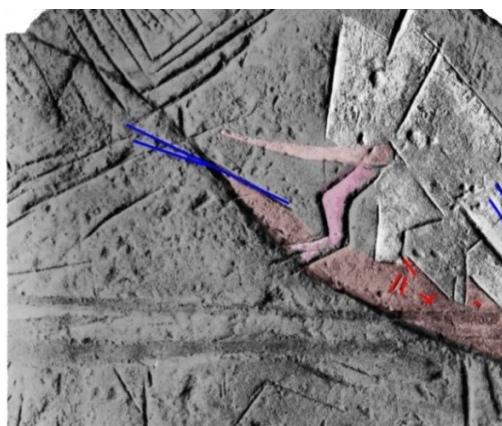


Fig. 3. Lepenski Vir (apud Srejović 1969).

We select an example from La Medeleine (Fig. 1b)¹² where it is the case of an artistic element in which the depiction of the urus/bison had been made with particular talent/fineness. Besides, during Paleolithic, in the area of Perigord, where it had flourished the civilization of the Perigordian, there are situations where only the bull head was represented¹³.

In Lepenski Vir, at the foundation of a

¹² Aubrier et alii 1997, 31.

¹³ Aubrier et alii 1997, 88.

house had been placed the incised image of a wild Taurus stepping over a human being, but the same animal was chased with arrows and spears¹⁴. The Bull/Taurus is seen in a dual manner: celestial, uranian (thunder, lightning, storm) and/or earthly, chthonian related to fertility, fecundity in its wide sense. We see that then it existed a series of beliefs, myths connected with the bull, the bucranium, the horn which lasted for millennia.

Bucranium in sanctuaries

If in the sanctuaries from the Paleolithic the bull and its symbols were painted, incised, sculptured in chalk, in the first sanctuaries from the PPN, the bucranium is represented stylized on the columns, as in the case from Göbekli Tepe, where on the columns in form of a “T” it is placed the bull and in one case, the bucranium¹⁵. Besides, the bull, the bucranium and the horn are frequently met in temples and in sanctuaries¹⁶. In the sanctuaries from Çatal Höyük, the cult of bucranium encounters the most varied forms, being represented on diverse spots, playing an important role on altars.

There, the bucranium appears on the edge of the altars in various examples, associated with the ram and the he-goat, as we have already underlined above; it is met on the top of the column, on the columns placed in series and in many other ways. Even the bull horn has different depictions, being attached to the horns or made out of clay. We might underline that in Çatal Höyük can be met almost all possible variants the bull horn appears.

One typology of the columns or edges of altars from Çatal Höyük we have from Brian Hayden¹⁷, another one is made by us (Fig. 4), but also by students or PhD students like Adela Mateş (married Kovács)¹⁸, in her PhD thesis. Here we will use the typology made up by Adela Mateş, because we consider it the most eloquent one.

¹⁴ Srejović 1969, Fig. 75-76.

¹⁵ Schmidt 2007, 76 ff., 83 ff., 269, kat. 4.

¹⁶ Gimbutas 1999, 35, 74, 75, 76,-77, 97.

¹⁷ Hayden 2003, 191, Fig. 6.13.14.

¹⁸ Mateş 2010.

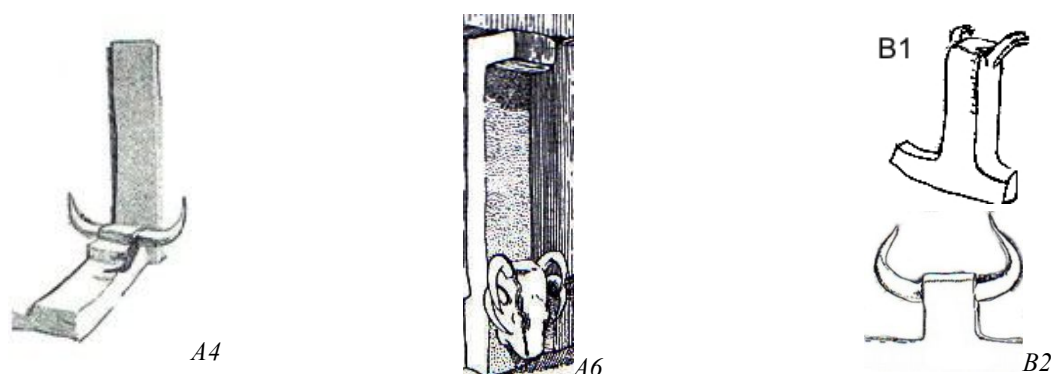


Fig. 4. Types of bucranium from Çatal Höyük (A-B codes Adela Mateş; after Adela Mateş)

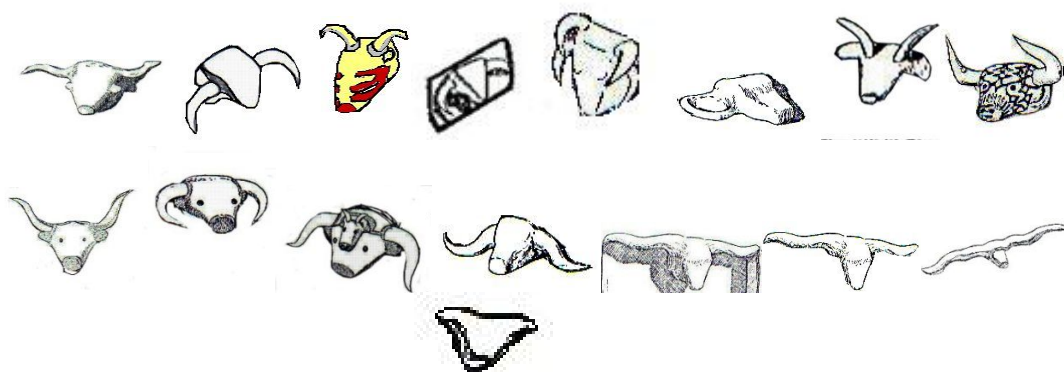
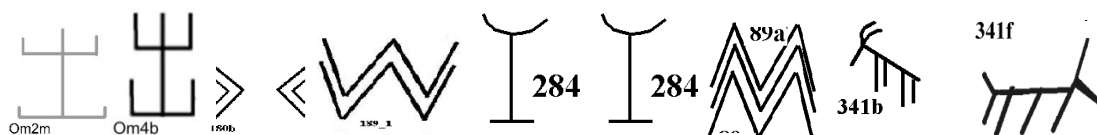


Fig. 5a. Çatal Höyük, bucrania on columns (1-3), on altars (4-6), on walls (4-5), after Adela Mateş; Lazarovici DS (Danube Script codes) ▼



To these must be added the bucrania with the bull on the wall (Fig. 4.b3-b4), the associated bull or singular bucrania depicting a he-goat or a ram (Fig. fig. 5.4-5), the horns on altar-edges of the B type with numerous horns (Fig- 4 A6, 5.1-2,4, 6.1), horns in clay relief, waved horns (Fig. 4. b3, b4, 5.3). It is not the case here to enter into details concerning the significations, these being numerous, from various points of view. If there are sanctuaries of some familiar groups, then they may represent totemic ancestors, symbols of a family group that have a mythical ancestor or many other variants.

Some sanctuaries are placed in the center of the station and they might be community sanctuaries, in our opinion¹⁹.

¹⁹ Lazarovici Gh. et alii 2001, I.1, 269, Fig. 239.

Below one may notice that in Çatal Höyük there is a true familiar mythology and a community one, in which the bull, suggested through the bucrania, played an important role in the spirituality of that community.

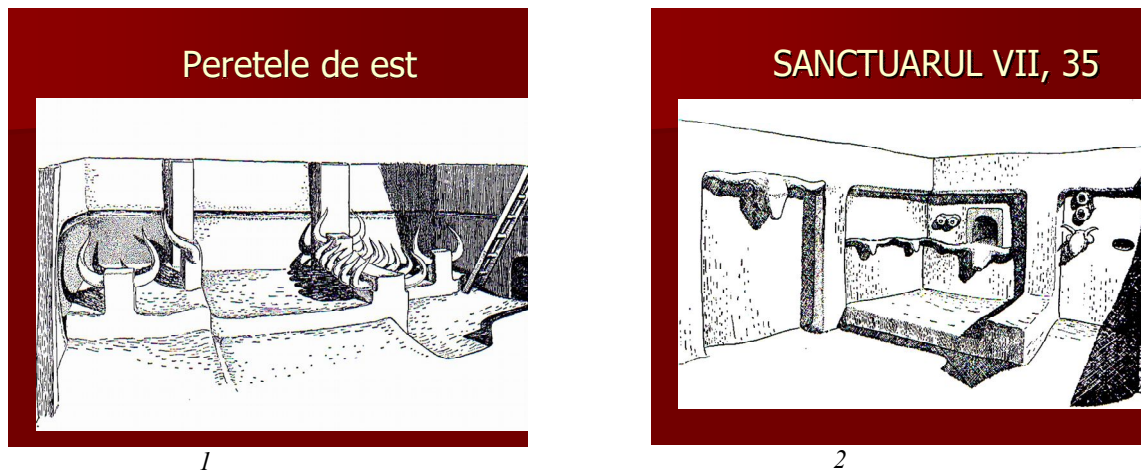


Fig. 5b. Çatal Höyük, bucrania on columns, altars, walls; codes DS.

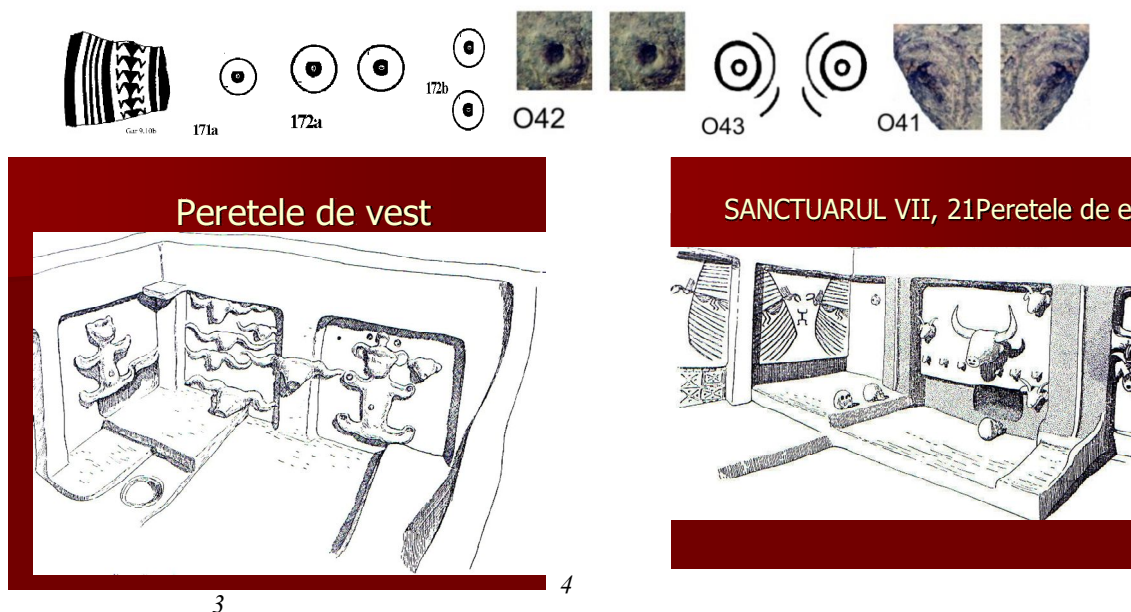
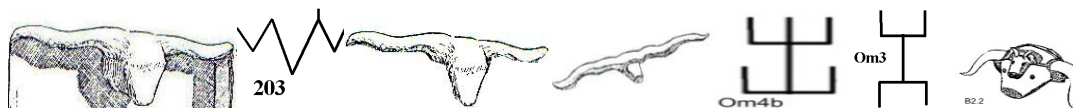


Fig. 5c. Çatal Höyük, bucrania on columns (3), on altars (1), on walls (2-4) associated with the he-goat and/or the ram (2-4) after Adela Mateş.



In the same time, these give us the possibility to understand and explain why later, in our civilizations, there are still kept some customs, submitted from one generation to another, as a result of some migrations or the transmission/dissemination of some myths, practices or customs.

In the Early Neolithic, even if there are numerous sanctuaries, for the moment there have not been encountered sanctuaries with monumental bucrania, but there is a series of pieces, amulets which have the form of a bucranium (Fig. 7). Starting from the Upper Neolithic, in the Balkans, in a series of cultures, there appear temples and sanctuaries with monumental statues related to the cult of the bull and the bucranium.

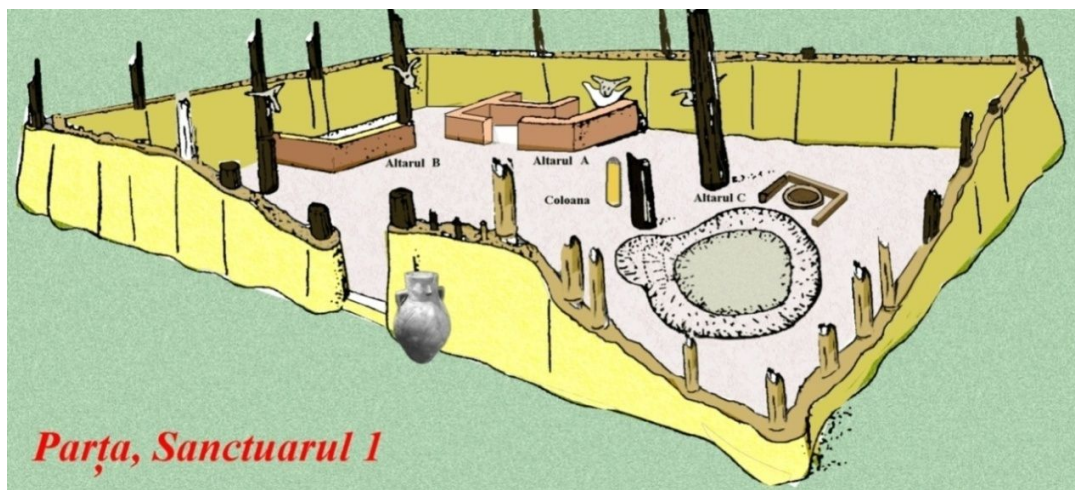
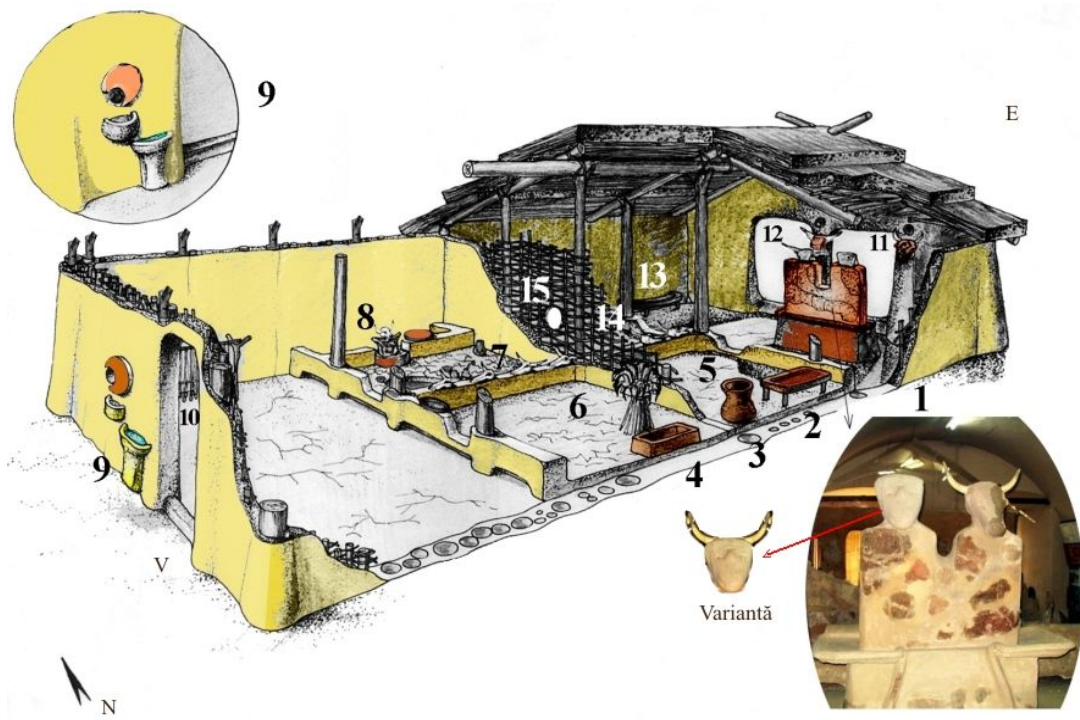


Fig. 6. Parța (5300 – 5000 BC): ▲ 1, Sanctuary 1 with bucranium on the altar A; ▼ 2, Sanctuary 2.



The most obvious example are the sanctuaries from Parța, where we have a temple (Sanctuary 2), community sanctuaries, domestic sanctuaries, in which we may find the cult of the

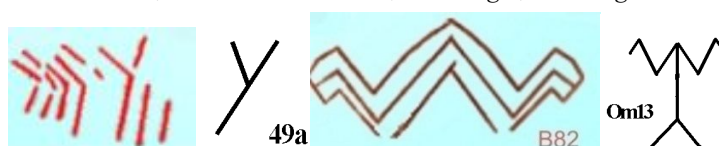
bull and the bucranium. Of course, the Temple (Sanctuary 2) with its monumental statue and other elements had influenced the spiritual life.

About the sanctuaries from Parța we have written in various cases²⁰, these facts are well-known, there is no point to insist here on them, but some images are necessary, especially for the cult of the bucranium.

We have not some other direct data about the bucranium which was used during those times of the Sanctuary 1²¹. We believe that it might be the bucranium which was placed in the niche from the entrance of the Sanctuary 2 or another bucranium about the same dimensions.



Fig. 7. Parța, idols, bust with bull trophies (reconstruction) Sanctuary 2: to the left, from the altar A; center, the Eastern Entrance; to the right, Dwelling 8.



The cult of the bull is permanently associated with the cult of the bucranium. Even in the case of the monumental statue from the Sanctuary 2, the partner of the Great Mother was the bull, marked by/indicated through a bull head. The head of the Mother is unknown, that is why there are two reconstructions of the Great Mother (Fig. 7 see also the variants of the head): one that has a

²⁰ Lazarovici Gh. et alii 2001, 271, 276, 278, 279, 282, 292; Lazarovici C.-M., Lazarovici Gh. 2006, 252, Fig. 49/b etc.

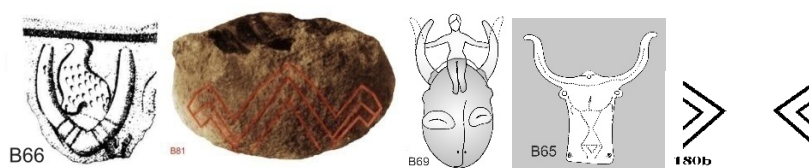
²¹ Lazarovici Gh. et alii 2001, 207, Fig. 168a.

triangular head as in the case of the figurines from the Vinča culture (the sanctuary from Zorlențu Mare, level 6 or the double statue from the same station and other double statues) and a reconstruction with horns, after the model of the altar from the sanctuary in Trușești (L61)²².

In Parța, there are monumental busts on which skulls or bull trophy had been placed and in their proximity there were some fireplaces inside the altars, on which sacrifices to the gods were made (meat and cereals).



Fig. 8. Parța, the altar from dwelling 126; Sanctuary 2, Columns with: a, the Moon, b, the Sun.



In the altar from dwelling 126, on a wooden column, there was placed a bucranium stuck with clay²³. In Sanctuary 2, in front of the monumental statues, the columns ended in bucrania made of clay, which had bull horns.

²² Petrescu-Dîmbovița et alii 1954, 7 sqq; 1963; Monah 1997, 38, 9/1.

²³ The inventory from the dwelling had been destroyed by the collision with big balls of burned clay: Lazarovici Gh. et al. 1985, 55, VI/5-7; 2001, I.1, 157-159, 275, Fig. 121; Lazarovici C-M., Lazarovici Gh. 2006, 352-355.

Between the horns, on the side with the statue of the Mother, there was placed a semi-sphere with meander, interpreted as being the Moon, and the side from the bull, having no décor, had been interpreted as being the Sun²⁴. All these are being related to the *Celestial Taurus*, the day dominating the male part (Fig. 9b), the night, the female part (Fig. 9a), according to the situations in which and how it is presented.

1b. Representation of the bucranium on columns

As we have seen above, the column appears/is encountered in the sanctuaries. Among the oldest associations of the bucranium with the columns are the engravings of the Paleolithic art from Ukraine. Here, next to another signs from the bucrania, above all, there is reproduced the sun (Fig. 10), suggesting the variant of the celestial bull.



Fig. 9. Altars with: a, Knossos, bucrania associated with the double axe; b, clay model of a sanctuary with four storied bucrania, Knossos; c, altar with four bucrania, Israel cent. 8 (a-b, apud Torcică 2012, 68, pl. V.6, Fig. V.4; c, apud Golan 2003, 130, Fig. 122.5).

²⁴ The theme of the association between the bull and bucranium with the sun and moon appears in various situations and forms: Golan 2003, 124 sqq, Fig. 115.2, 117.2 118.3; 119.5; etc.



Fig. 10. Ukraine, apud Golan 2003, 130, Fig. 122.1.

communication between these worlds.

From all these reasons plays the column an important role. In various times, there had been born a cult of the column. In order to understand its role for the prehistory, it is necessary a short passage into the prehistoric times.

During the early historic times, in Crete, the column expresses the image of the Great God (in the royal villa from Knossos, at Hagia Tridda, Knossos: see also below Fig. 37 etc.)²⁷. On the Cretan seals, the bucranium defines the temple and the altar²⁸. The same sense we see in Parța at L126 (Fig. 8), with the exception that there, the suggested divinity through the bucranium is the bull, just like it appears on the monumental statue (Fig. 6.2). Also in Parța, we notice some other deities associated with the bucranium: the Sun and the Moon. In those cases, the column suggested the connection between the Earth (the Moon associated with the Great Mother) and the Sky (the Sun associated with the Taurus/Bull, Fig. 11c).

Another connection coming from the archaic is to be found on a column from a grave in Oltenia region, but also another pre- and protohistoric situations: the connection with the underworld was represented by the Snake, which was escalating the column, the column being the link between the Earth and the Sky (represented there by the Sun)²⁹.

²⁵ Lazarovici C.-M., Lazarovici Gh. 2015.

²⁶ Picard 1948, 61; Eliade 1981, 42, 43, 51, 55; Rutkowski 1981, 47, Fig. 4/1-2, 13/4, 12/6; Markević 1985, 16; Chevalier, Gheerbrant 1995, 256; Ovchinnikov 1996, 118; Lazarovici Gh. et alii 2001, I.1, 209-210; Ursulescu 2002, 2, with reference to the stone; Golan 2003, 124 ff.

²⁷ Gimbutas 1984, 79-80; Gimbutas 1999, 142.

²⁸ Matz 1969, 121; Gimbutas 1999, 141/-142.

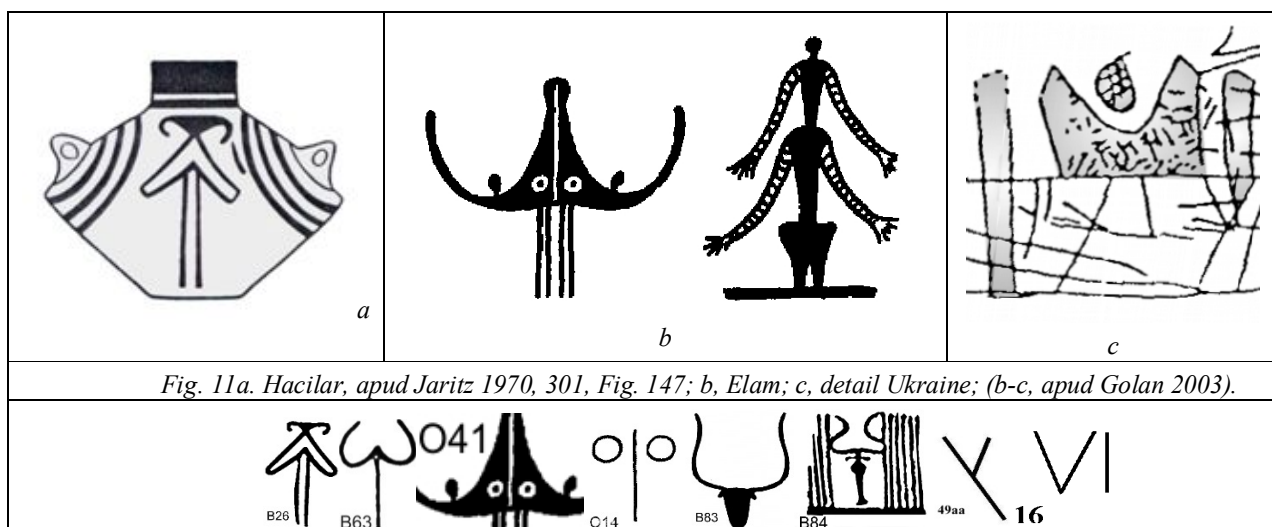


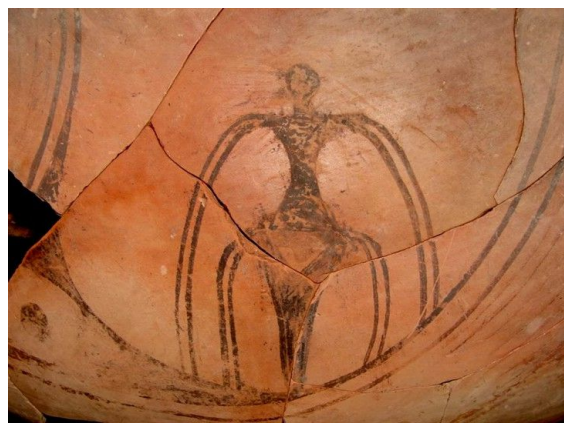
Fig. 11a. Hacilar, apud Jaritz 1970, 301, Fig. 147; b, Elam; c, detail Ukraine; (b-c, apud Golan 2003).

On a vessel from Asia Minor (Fig. 11a) the bucranium appears on a column ended like the peak of an arrow. Also as a peak towards the sky are the horns from an image from Elam³⁰.

The column having the bull head was seen by us as being totemic pillar, the pillar of the ancestors³¹. A similar situation we have from Elam (Fig. 11b; cca. 3000 BC), where two women dancers are represented one above the other, on an image of cosmic tree or column. More, also in the Cucuteni culture there appear such representations of women dancers forming a column (Fig. 12-14)³².



Fig. 12a. Petreni, Cucuteni B, apud Bicbaev 1996;



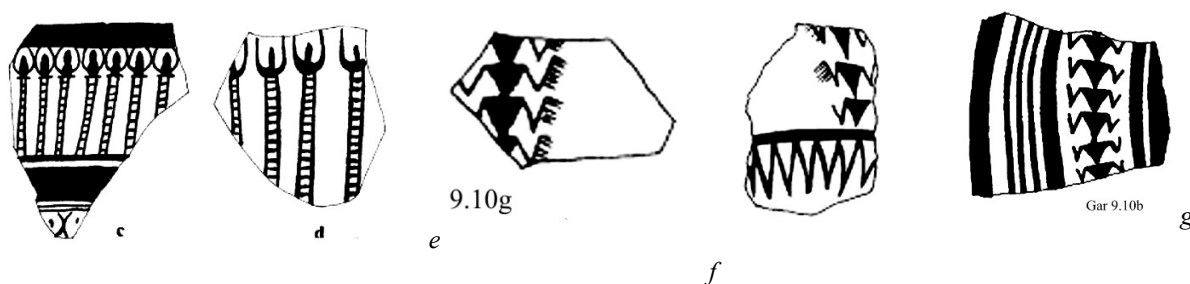
b, Fetești-La Schit, Cucuteni B, apud Boghian, Ignătescu 2007;

²⁹ For references to the connection between the snake and the cosmic snake, column, the Sky with significations, symbols and signs see: Lazarovici C.-M., Lazarovici Gh. 2015, 43-44, Fig. 160-167.

³⁰ Golan 1991.

³¹ Lazarovici Gh. et alii 2001, I.1, 210.

³² *** Cucuteni-Trypillia 2008, 143, cat. M9.



c-g, women dancers strung as a column or placed on a column or scale (apud Garfinkel 2003).

The theme is wide spread, suggesting the idea of raising oneself on the column towards the sky through dance. About the dance and the forms presented by us below, from the Cucuteni – Trypillia culture, there are some eloquent examples (Petreni, Fig. 12a³³ and Fetești³⁴, Fig. 12b). The idea of the column or the tree of the women dancers cannot be put under question because, from the images below, the idea of dance and column appears in various situations. In some cases, the arms of the women dancers are suggesting the bull horns.

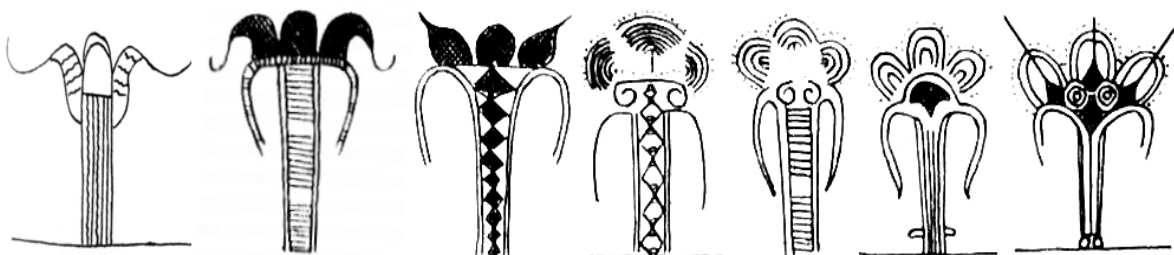


Fig. 13. Columns and bucrania, but also other symbols (trefoil/clover, sun, spiral).

³³ *** Cucuteni-Trypillia 2008, cat. M9.

³⁴ *** Cucuteni 2009, 115, Fig. 5.

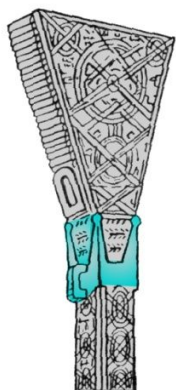


Fig. 14. The column,
the bucranium.

1c. Monumental bucrania in domestic sanctuaries or in other complexes

Archaeologists, when finding a monumental piece, are not always insisting upon the content of that construction, they do not rerun the analysis of the inventory of those constructions, therefore the information remain vague. There were also situations when these cases had been rerun and reinterpreted. This is the case of the discoveries from Kormadin, belonging to the time of the Vinča C phase, the discovered constructions being initially published as being dwellings³⁵.

Borislav Jovanović had rerun the analysis of the situations from Kormadin and he had made some reconstructions which allowed him to identify a community sanctuary; also, he underlines the existence of some other sanctuaries in Vrbianska Čuka and Madžari³⁶. Among the elements that characterize the sanctuaries, he speaks about the columns, the bucrania, the cult tables, walls or decorative friezes. In the domestic sanctuaries we find the bucrania, the cult tables, the altars. Monumental bucrania belonging to the Vinča culture are at Vinča – *Bjelo Brdo (BB)* and Gomolava.

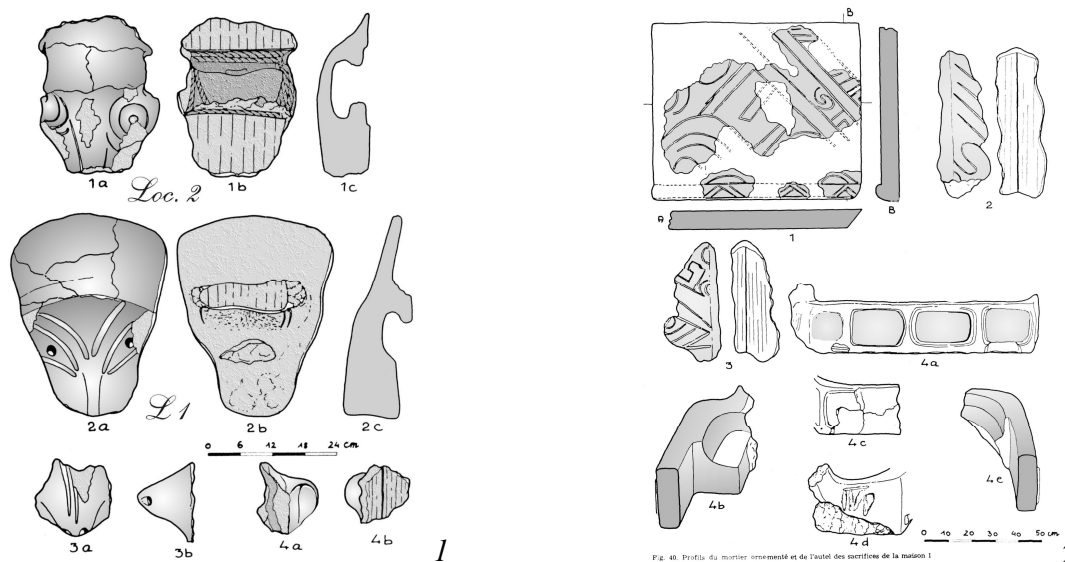


Fig. 15. Kormadin, fragments of bucrania from the complexes L1 and L2.

³⁵ Jovanović, Glisić 1961.

³⁶ Jovanović 1991.



From the two complexes in Kormadin had been maintained two bucrania and some other fragments.

Borislav Jovanović made some reconstructions³⁷ related to these two sanctuaries, one of the community and a domestic one (after the dwelling with various rooms and various altars). For the second case, during the reconstruction, the plan of the dwelling had been taken into account but also the imprints on the back of the head on which could be noticed the mark left by a beam structure (Fig. 15.1), a similar situation with the one from the “*House of the Stag*” in Parța³⁸. In both complexes, the cult of the bucranium is the dominant element.

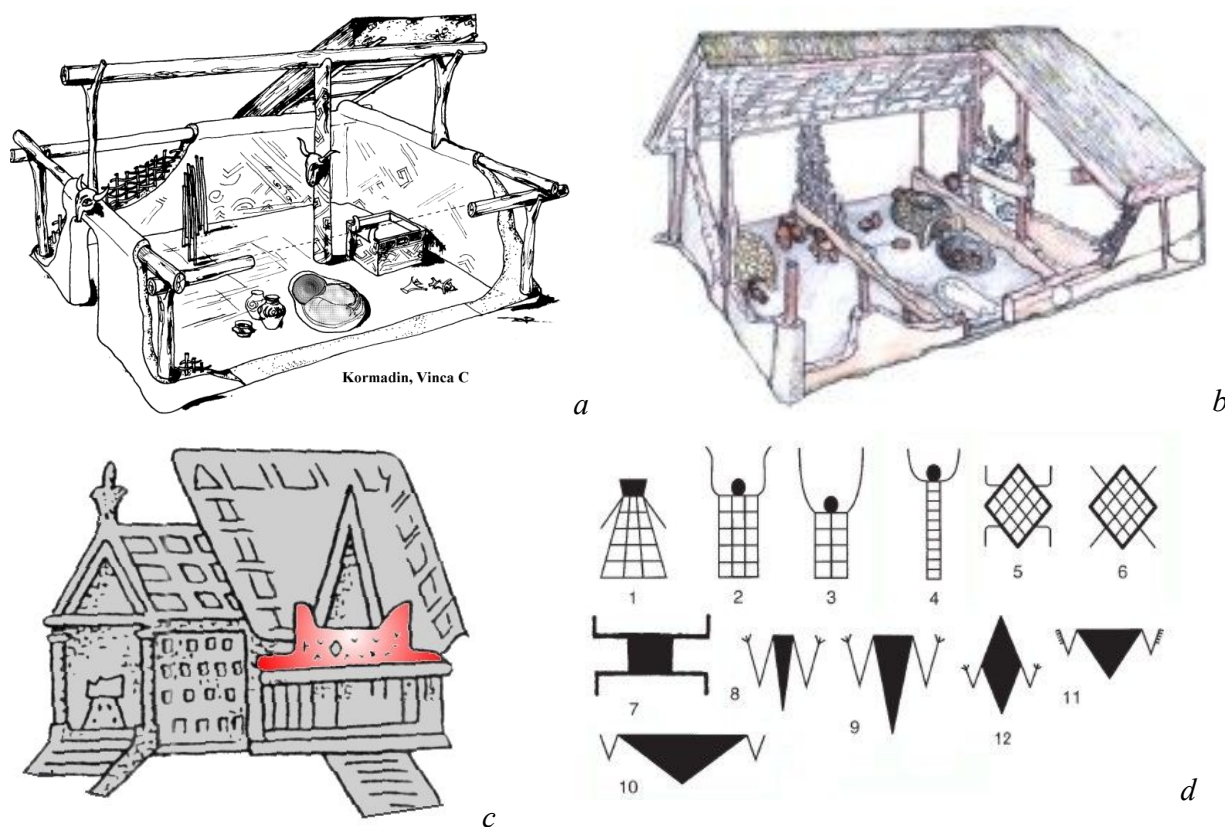


Fig. 16. Kormadin: a, Dwelling 1, reconstruction apud Jovanović B.; b, Dwelling 2, domestic sanctuary after Kovács A. 2015, 218, Fig. 3); c) coduri, bucranii stiliate

³⁷ Jovanović 1991: for the reconstructions he had been working with the architect Dana Rus, who made the reconstructions in Parța: Rus, Lazarovici Gh. 1991.

³⁸ Lazarovici Gh. et alii 2005; 2006.

At the Vojvodina Museum from Novi Sad there exist two monumental pieces from Gomolava, which in our opinion³⁹ and after the characteristics given by B. Jovanović, come from domestic or community sanctuaries.

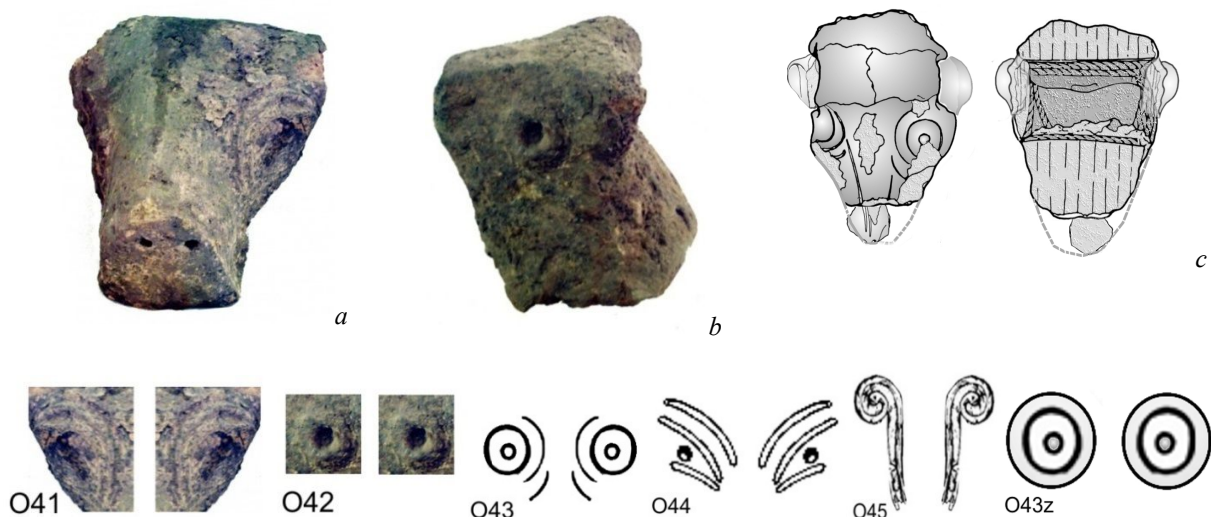


Fig. 18. Bucrania: a, Gomolava (apud Brukner, Petrović 1986); b, Gomolava ?; c, Kormadin, Dwelling 2, apud Jovanović B. 1991.

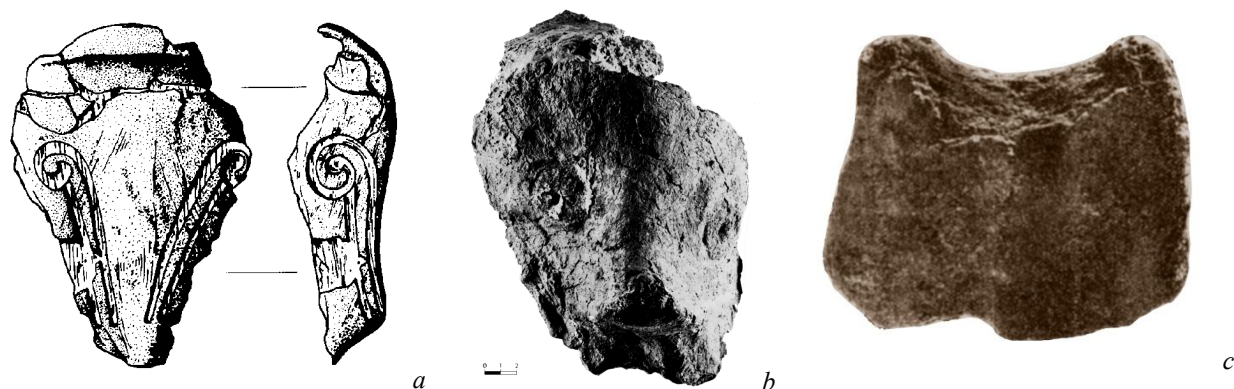


Fig. 20. Bucrania: a-b, Vinča-BB (a, after Staljo 1986; b, after Garašanin D. 1968); c, Bodești-Cetățuia Frumușica (after Matasă 1946).

³⁹ Brukner, Petrović 1986, cat. 16-18; Brukner 1988, 33, Fig. 3/7-8; Marangou 1992, 185, 328; Lazarovici Gh. et alii 2001, I.1, pl. 250/1-2, 275-276, 297-298; Lazarovici C.-M., Lazarovici Gh. 2006, 197, Fig. III.1.

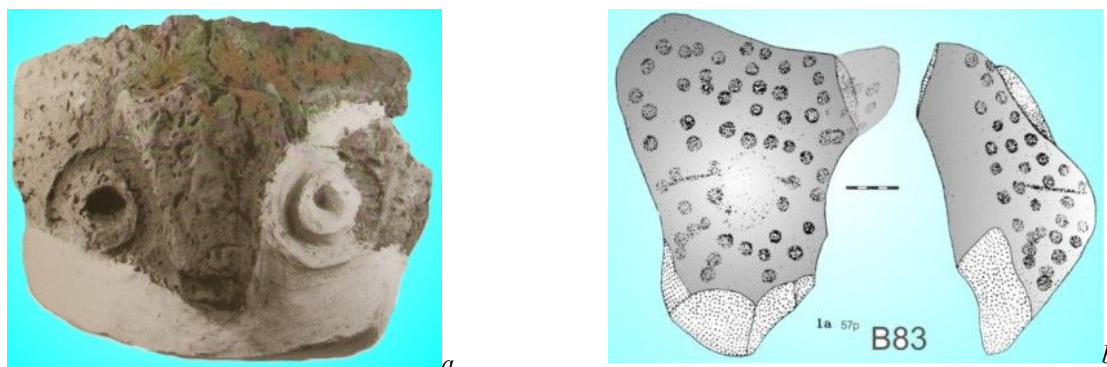


Fig. 21. Bucranium from: a, clay, after Hansen 2007.2, taf. 280.2; b, stone (Turdaș culture, after Luca 1966, Fig. 1a).

At the National Museum from Belgrad there is a bucranium attributed to the Vinča culture, but we do not have precise data about its place of origin. Taken after its form and eyes, it resembles the bucranium in Kormadin, from the community sanctuary. From Bodești-Cetățuia *Frumușica* we have another bucranium, being probably an architectural piece (fireplace, altar?).

From Turdaș are coming two bucrania: one of clay, with eyes made from concentric circles (Fig. 21.1), like in the case of the same date of Vinča, Gomolava and Kormadin (Fig. 20.21), and another one from stone, partly hammer-wrought and with marks from the hits on its face (Fig. 21.b). Also from Vinča, Draga Garašanin published another monumental bucranium which had the eyes like the pieces from Gomolava (Fig. 21⁴⁰).



Fig. 22. Dikili Tash (apud Papadopoulos, Nerantzis 2014).



Fig. 23a. Parța, The House of the Stag room A, level 7c-6.

⁴⁰ Garašanin D. 1968, Fig. 28; Babović 1984, cat. 212; Staljo 1986, cat. 218; Lazarovici Gh. et alii 2001, I.1, 276, pl. 250/3; Lazarovici C.-M., Lazarovici Gh. 2006, III.1, 197.



Fig. 23b-c. *The House of the Stag, room A, level 7c-6 (photo Lazarovici Gh.).*

These pieces are showing clearly the existence of some community sanctuaries or of the domestic ones in the Vinča culture. As one can notice from the profile of the pieces in Kormadin (Fig. 15.1), all have been covered with clay and placed on the foreheads or on the bull trophies. Some are community sanctuaries, others are domestic ones. As we have seen in Parța, Çatal Höyük, Kormadin, the bucranium plays an important role here.

Besides, the cult of the bull skull (sometimes the stag), its cutting, the burying, placing the pieces in the center of the station, at the base of some columns or pillars like in Zorlențu Mare, Jeff el Amar⁴¹ or at the foundation of some dwellings (Zau de Câmpie, Parța), on the walls (Parța P43⁴²) or in pits separated from the body (Turenilor Gorges, Zau etc.⁴³), placing some bodies of cattle without their skull⁴⁴, putting the horn in the floor of the Sanctuary 2 from Parța or on the floor (Parța P126, Fig. 8) and others, are related to the rituals of founding and abandonment⁴⁵. Of the same date as the bucrania from Vinča is one from Dikili Tash, which has marks of horn (Fig. 22)⁴⁶, being depicted the nostrils and the mouth (Fig. 18) but in a different manner compared with the cases from Vinča.

⁴¹ Hayden 2003, 198-199, Fig. 6.20.

⁴² Lazarovici Gh. et alii 1991, 278-279, Fig. 255.3; 2001; Lazarovici C.-M., Lazarovici Gh. 2006, 56, 74-75, Fig. III.1, 197, IIIB.187 b-c.

⁴³ *Tell Halaf*, Eliade 1981, 48: Tureni - *Poderei Gr.* 57, Rus et alii 1989-1993, 229-238, Fig. 1a; *Blagotin S3* considered as being a sanctuary: Vuković 2004, 84, Fig. 1; apud Stanković 1992, 177-178; Horváth, Paluch 2005, 185, 324; Orăștie, L2, Luca, Pinter 2001, 90, 154, Fig. 6.

⁴⁴ Grygiel 2008, 794, Fig. 656; Lazarovici C.-M., Lazarovici Gh. 2006, 438, Fig. III.37.

⁴⁵ Lazarovici Gh. 2009b.

The bucranium is guarding the entrance of the temples, of the clay models of temples, sanctuaries, clay models of sanctuaries and houses (Fig. 22, 24 see also below).

Also from a domestic altar, belonging to the early phase of a block of dwellings (some being even storied) in Parța, named the "*House of the Stag*", was discovered a table-altar built on unburned clay balls, on whose edges was placed a bucranium from unburned clay. That piece had been burnt accidentally, due to the fire from the story built, in a subsequent stage, on top of that room (Fig. 23-24)⁴⁷.

During another subsequent stage, when the same room had been extended to its west side, there was fixed on the wall another skull of a stag, kept together with the burned horns. Having an asymmetrical form, it might have been also just another bucranium (bull or something else). In the case of many cultic constructions from Parța, where had been discovered bucrania and trophies, there have not been found the devotion horns.

Actually, it is not hard to imagine that the bull of some community, after being sacrificed (due to its age or from other reasons), the meat was eaten on the occasion of some feasts and its head/skull (symbol of force, power, the horn, the lowing/mooing etc.) could not have been simply abandoned.

⁴⁶ Treuil, Darque 1998, Fig. 4, 118, Fig. 1.2; Treuil, Tsirtsani 2000, 216, Fig. 2; Lazarovici C.-M., Lazarovici Gh. 2006, 197, III.1, 197; Séfériades 2005, 97-113, 98, Fig. 1; Papadopulos and Nerantzis 2014.

⁴⁷ Lazarovici Gh., Parța 2006-2009, Manuscript report.



Fig. 24a. Knossos, apud Het oude Griekenland.

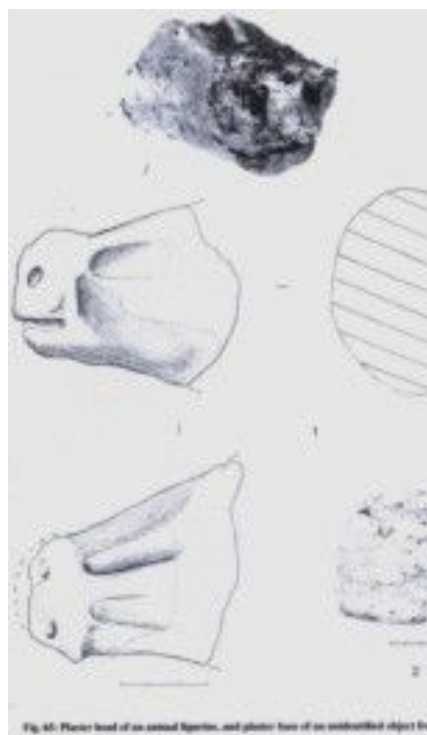


Fig. 24b. Endröd III, apud Makkay, Starnini 2008.

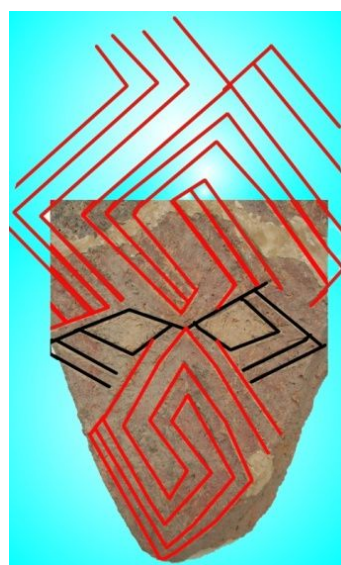


Fig. 24c. Parța, The House of the Stag (photo Lazarovici Gh.).

It became a symbol of what it had been for the herds, for the community, now it played the role of protecting the house, the entrancement⁴⁸ and the station.

In many dwellings there had been placed bucrania or trophies in the foundations or inside the perimeter of the house, in order to protect the household and its people/lodgers (see below the bucranium and the graves)⁴⁹.

Other complexes. The bucrania are to be found in some other complexes, also having a cultic role, but of whose functionality we cannot indicate precisely. These are known even from the Early Neolithic at Endrőd, where they appear in different complexes (in dwellings, fixed on the walls or inside the pit-cottages⁵⁰).

Their fragmentary state does not allow much comment, but as in some other places, they were unburned and they had been burned subsequently, that is why they are fragmentary (animal mouths/muzzles, ears, horn remains). But some, after the form of the muzzles, remind us of those from the sanctuaries or the monumental altars (Fig. 18-24). The fact that they had not been placed in the pits or they were found in the cottages, shows the appreciation for such cult objects.

Many of the monumental bucrania are architectonic pieces, part of some constructions or annexes of some altars. Some have the form of columns, stele or big objects on their own and they had been fixed in the floor or lied on the floor, being connected to the functionality of that place; the mobile ones could have had functional usages⁵¹ or cultic ones⁵², but they also could have been moved as a matter of necessity.

The well-known legends linked with the Minotaur, from the palace in Knossos, are supported by one of the most monumental representations of the bucranium cult. One of the underground entrances of the palace in Knossos is guarded by a monumental bucranium, symbol of the royal power, having the same idea with other pieces involved here, this famous bucranium being associated with the double axe (Fig. 92), both being symbols of the royal power.

⁴⁸ Schier, Draşovean et alii 2004, 163, Abb. 8; Lazarovici Gh. 2009b, Fig. 20.

⁴⁹ Lazarovici Gh. 2009b, Fig. 5b.

⁵⁰ Makkay, Starnini 2008, 63-65: Endrőd, 3.119 G12-G13, dwellings 1 and 2 and object C.

⁵¹ The role of the clove hearth, when they are tall enough, how is the case of the piece in Turdaş.

⁵² Even those from the cult complexes may have a functional role during the rituals around the fireplaces.

1.d1. Bucrania – columns

Often, the bucrania have the form of columns or cones, with their superior part like a saddle or like two horns, from where we have the definition of the bucranium, just like we meet these on the miniature thrones and others (Fig. 26-29). There are also images on the seals with the column or the sacred tree and the bucranium (see below Fig. 58).

The grinding mill/hand mill, just like the bucranium, is a symbol of regeneration. By the help of the grinding mill/hand mill and through the cultic grinding, we have the transformation/change from the floral environment to the human one⁵³.

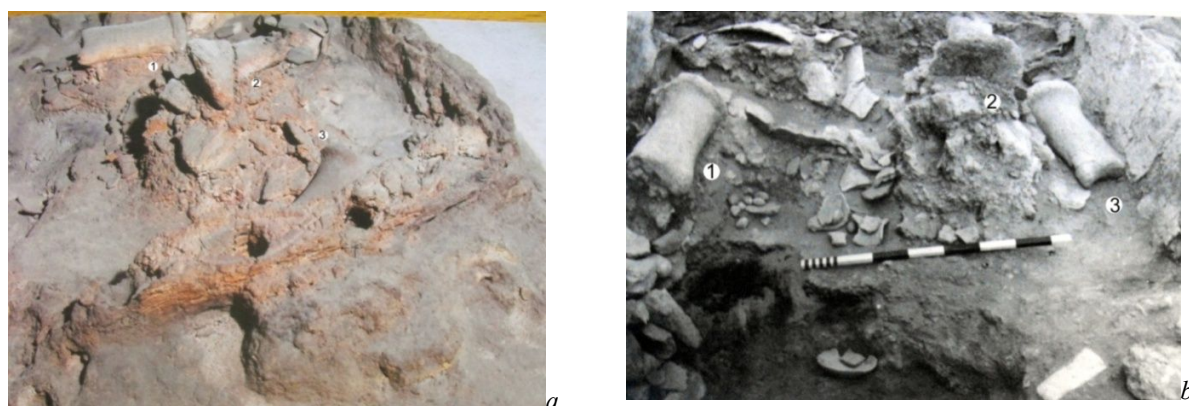
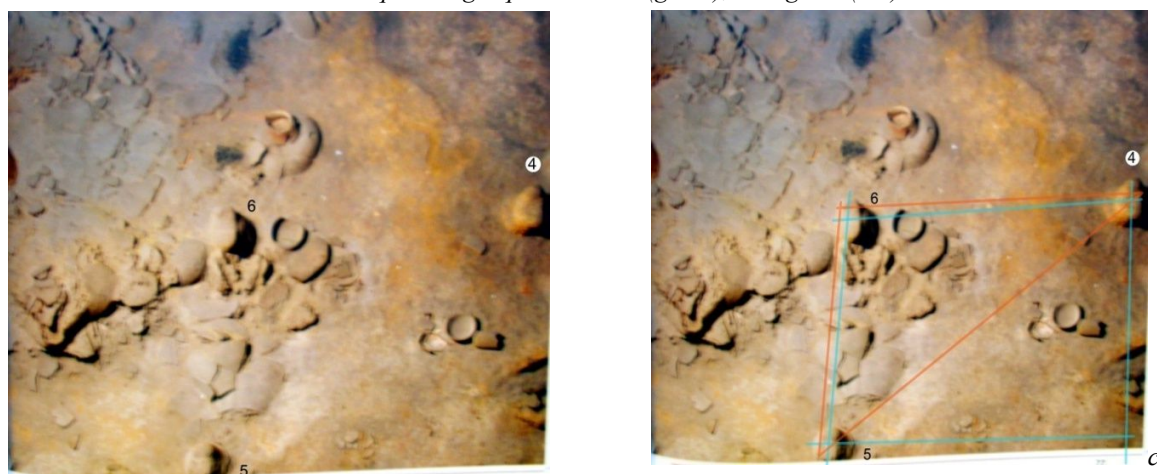


Fig. 26. Bucrania: a-b, Stara Zagora – The Municipal Hospital, Karanovo II, apud Kalchev 2005; c, Our variant of structure: quadrangle/quadrilateral (green), triangular (red).



⁵³ Makkay 1968, 13-36; Ljamić-Valović 1982, 429-431; Lazarovici Gh. et alii 2001, 281-283, 292, Fig. 180-181-183.



Fig. 27. Functionality reconstruction, The Museum from Plovdiv.

In Stara Zagora – *The Municipal Hospital*, at the level of Karanovo II had been discovered a sanctuary, even though the author, Peter Kalchev, has been recently tempted to consider it a dwelling.

Here have been discovered a big number of monumental bucrania under the form of columns. Some pieces are fixed on or in the floor upstairs (Fig. 26, our mark, No. 1-2) or downstairs (Fig. 26, our mark, No. 3). Peter Kalchev

considering that the pieces from Stara Zagora – *The Municipal Hospital* were used as a plinth for sustaining some wood platforms (Fig. 26c, 27). In two cases there had been discovered 3 columns in the form of bucrania.

If prior to this Peter Kalchev considered them bucrania, relatively recent he has assumed that they were 3+1 this sort of bucrania (but each time one is missing) for sustaining a rectangular platform, which is not possible (see the variant 27b⁵⁴): in two places there were three pieces each (Fig. 26.1-2 two belonged to the story, being over the adobe ruins, and another one belonging to the ground floor (Fig. 27.3).

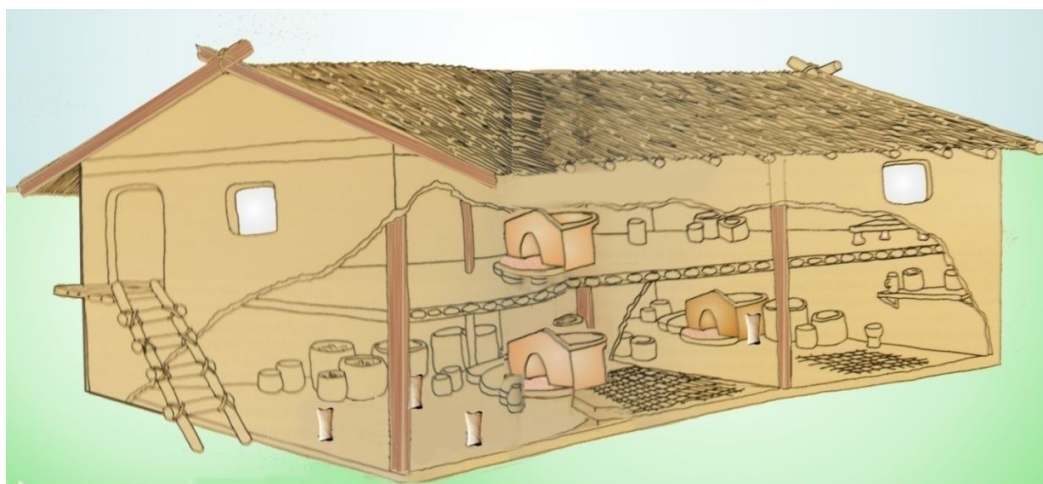


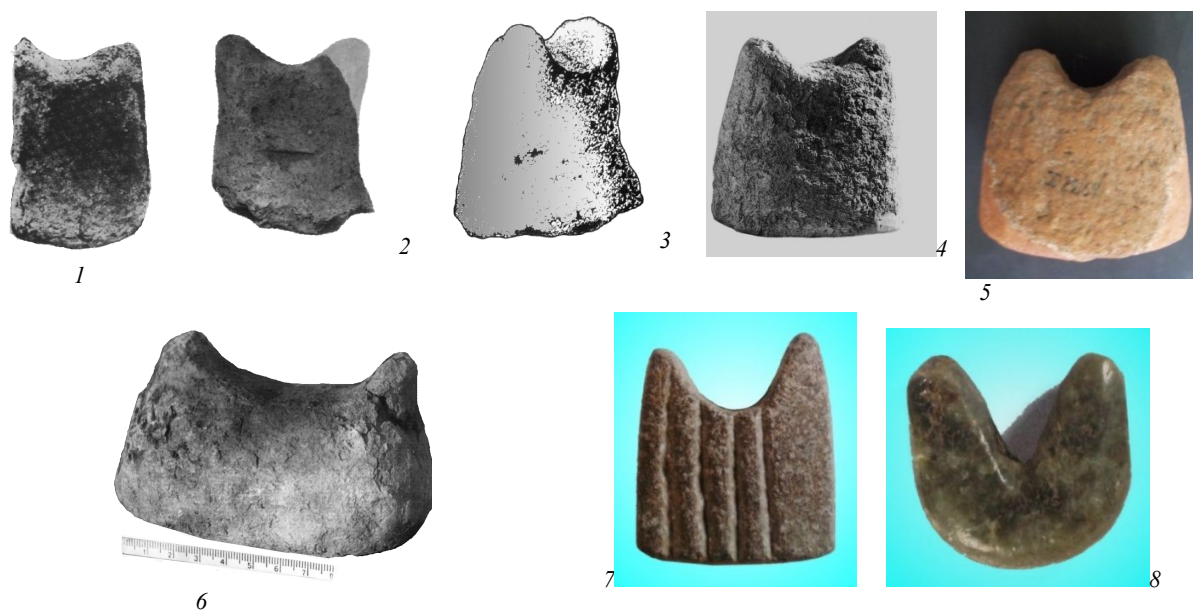
Fig. 28. Our reconstruction after the draft of P. Kalchev.

The situation from the story plan/upstairs is not clear, only two bucrania were there, which fell down together with the adobe from the floor of the story. Under the assumed table or bed from

⁵⁴ A rectangular platform cannot be placed in equilibrium on three pillars fixed in a triangular form, underlines the author regarding the position of the pillars.

the ground floor there were a grinder/mill and some other vessels having no sense to be placed there (Fig. 27a). If there was a bucranium, then the big vessels and the grinder/mill were related to the sacrifices made to the celestial deity embodied by the column and the symbol of the bucranium. However, even the large quantity of the vessels might be related to the offerings. Of course, the big ovens might be an argument for the domestic role, but we have so many replica/models connected with the cult of the fire and earth...⁵⁵. In the case of two bucrania one may notice that they were fixed or glued during restorations, they are even rebuilt (Fig. 27) on a table altar or in the floor (Fig. 26-27).

Such bucrania of smaller dimensions, but which remind us of the column or of the frustoconic shape, appear in various situations (Fig. 29: 1, Jaša Tepe; 2, Sajol; 3, Porodin; 4, Vestő – Mågor⁵⁶; 5, Turdaş; Fig. 29.5, Poduri⁵⁷). Regarding the location of this category of pieces, we notice that the ones in Poduri come from the room of a sanctuary found close/next to a fireplace⁵⁸. Also that building/dwelling had one story, many rooms, 6+1 (in the form of a cross) altar-fireplaces, but also two boxes/cassettes, one of them having a grinder/mill.



⁵⁵ Eliade 1981, 2, 218, 343, 350, 476 et al.; Gimbutas 1991, 21, 69, Fig. 22, 313, Fig. 8.8; Todorova-Vaisova 1986, 80, Fig. 12/1; Ovchinnikov 1996, 115-119, Fig. 1; Monah 1997, 45; *Cucuteni* 1997, 109, cat. 14a-d; Lazarovici Gh. et alii 2001, I.1, 238, 270 etc.; Nikolov 2007; Gligor 2009.1, 203-206, 2009.2, pl. CXIII.1, CCX.5.

⁵⁶ Kalicz, Raczky 1981; Lazarovici Gh. et alii 2001, 278-279, Fig. 255.6-7; Lazarovici C.-M., Lazarovici Gh. 2006, Fig. IIIB. 188a.

⁵⁷ Preoteasa 2012, 88, Fig. 5.1-2A-B.

⁵⁸ Preoteasa 2012, 91, Fig. 12 location, photo 15.1A, 2A, 3A, drawing 1B, 2B, 3B.

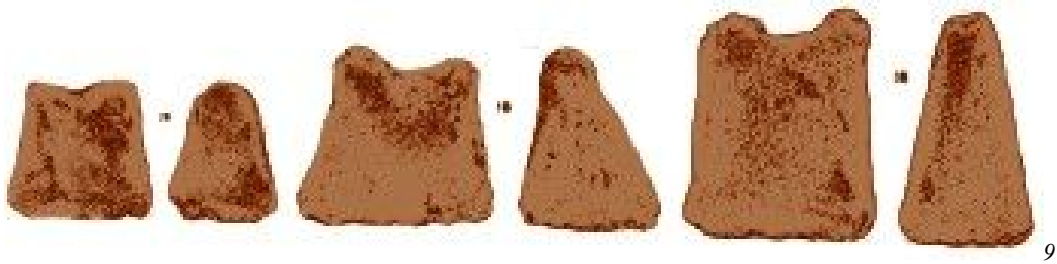


Fig. 29. Various types of bucrania: 1, Jaša Tepe; 2, Sajol; 3, Porodin; 4, Vestő – Măgor; 5, Turdaş (photo Lazarovici); 6, Parța (photo Lazarovici Gh.) ; 7, Körtik Tepe; 8, Göbekli Tepe I; 9, Poduri.

According to the inventory, it might be the case of a community sanctuary and one of the rooms (marked as P3), which had the two bucrania and a box/cassette, might have been the place used/inhabited by the servant/attendant of the sanctuary, the priestess, we believe. In this case, the bucrania played a cultic role, but also a functional one⁵⁹.

1.d2. Stele

The term defines small or large monuments having the form of a column or pillar and playing a votive or funerary role. Some of the pieces, which we will analyze below, due to their rectangular forma, being taller, resemble with the idea of a column, but they always have the habitual cones on the top/over their heads, which is suggesting the bucranium. The theme of the bucranium as a stela, in the case of the fireplaces and others, is to be found in a later example, but quite suggestive, in a temple belonging to the protohistoric time, the Early Bronze age, from Beycesultan level XVI, where the altar was made from two rows of columns placed in the back, one in front, two stele with bucranium, and a central fireplace, having also a bucranium⁶⁰. Also, there may be found some askos vessels for the sacred liquid and others.

⁵⁹ Özkaya, Coşkun 2009.

⁶⁰ The issue of the horns on the stele, the altar-fireplaces in Anatolia: Loyd, Mellaart 1958; Diamant, Rutter 1969.

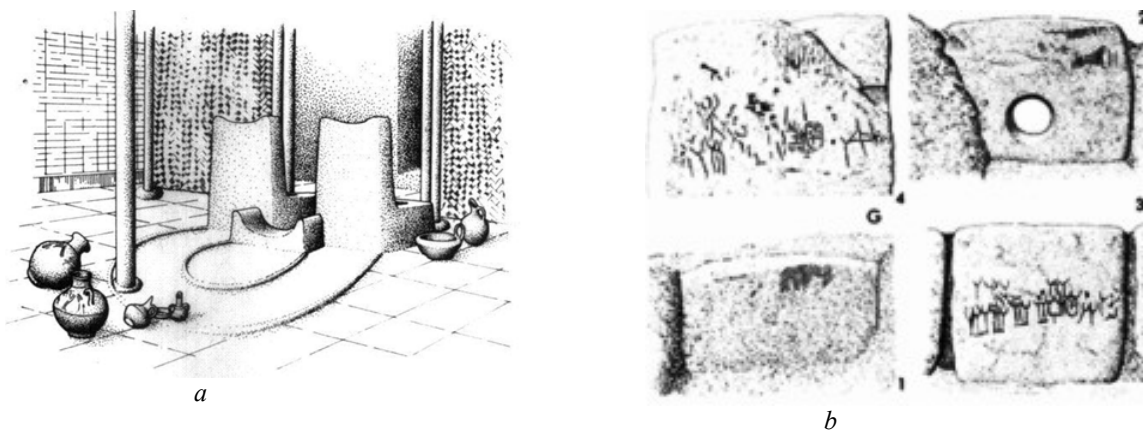


Fig. 30a. Altar from the sanctuary in Beycesultan X.VIII; b, megaliths related to the cult of the dead, Züschen, invoking of the sun (apud Müller-Karpe 1974, Fig. G4) depicting the orant or the column with bucrania; c, scepters in the form of a column from Kortik Tepe, apud Özkaya, Coşkun 2009, Fig. 9.



The fireplace was being protected by the cult of the bull, symbol of force, irresistible behavior, divine energy, fertility (the rich seed of Rudra from Rig - Veda fertilizing the earth), fecundity (the impetuous male), divinity (the celestial bulls) etc.⁶¹. This myth lasts from the Neolithic, taking into consideration the idea above and the ones that follow, where various pieces reflect different aspects of this cult and its significations. On some stele from Egypt, the bucranium dominates the images, even the form of the stela resembles a bucranium (Fig. 31b). In another scene from the Izapan civilization, the stylized bucranium, placed under the celestial vault, suggests the fight with the natural forces, the supernatural forces, the unleashed ones, the ones that seem to escape/come out from the horn and build up the horns of the ram or of the bull, with incredible/unleashed energies.

⁶¹ Roska 1939; Karageorghis 1977, 38-39; *divinity in Tell Halaf*; Eliade 1981, 48; *Cucuteni- Trypillia* 2008, 130, 212-217; Chevalier, Gheebrant 1995, v. Bull, Enlil, Rudra, Zeus etc.

The fighter has weapons and horns, the bucranium being suggested also by the presence of a boat with bucranium or personages/characters⁶².

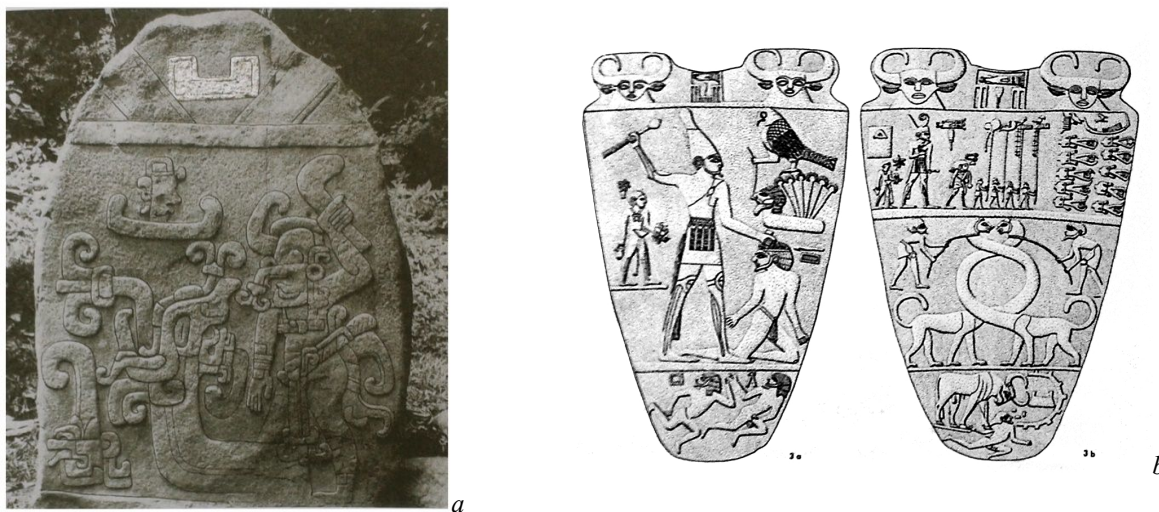


Fig. 31a. The stela-altar, Izapan culture, Mexico; b, Hierakopolis, apud Müller - Karpe 1968.

Sometimes they are scepters (Fig. 30c) (some smashing ones, according to the authors⁶³), which have the form of a column, but they may have some practical functionalities, just like some glazers had the form of tablets. Made out from hard rock and carefully designed, we believe they had also some cultic significations.

The stele have different forms, for example the monumental ones, belonging to the community sanctuaries of Cucuteni culture. The stela-altar from Trușești (Fig. 32a)⁶⁴, which has as its main theme the birth, the human genesis, gravidity, is depicting the Mother-Bull couple.

⁶² Hayden 2003, 351, Fig. 11.3.

⁶³ Kortik Tepe, apud Özkaya, Coşkun 2009, Fig. 9.

⁶⁴ Petrescu-Dîmbovița 1963, 172-186; 1976; 1984; Petrescu-Dîmbovița et alii 1999, 121, Fig. 88, 229/5; Gimbutas 1984, 77, Fig. 45; Lazarovici C.-M. 2004; Lazarovici C.-M., Lazarovici Gh. 2007, Fig. Ve. 98, see also the old bibliography of the same authors.

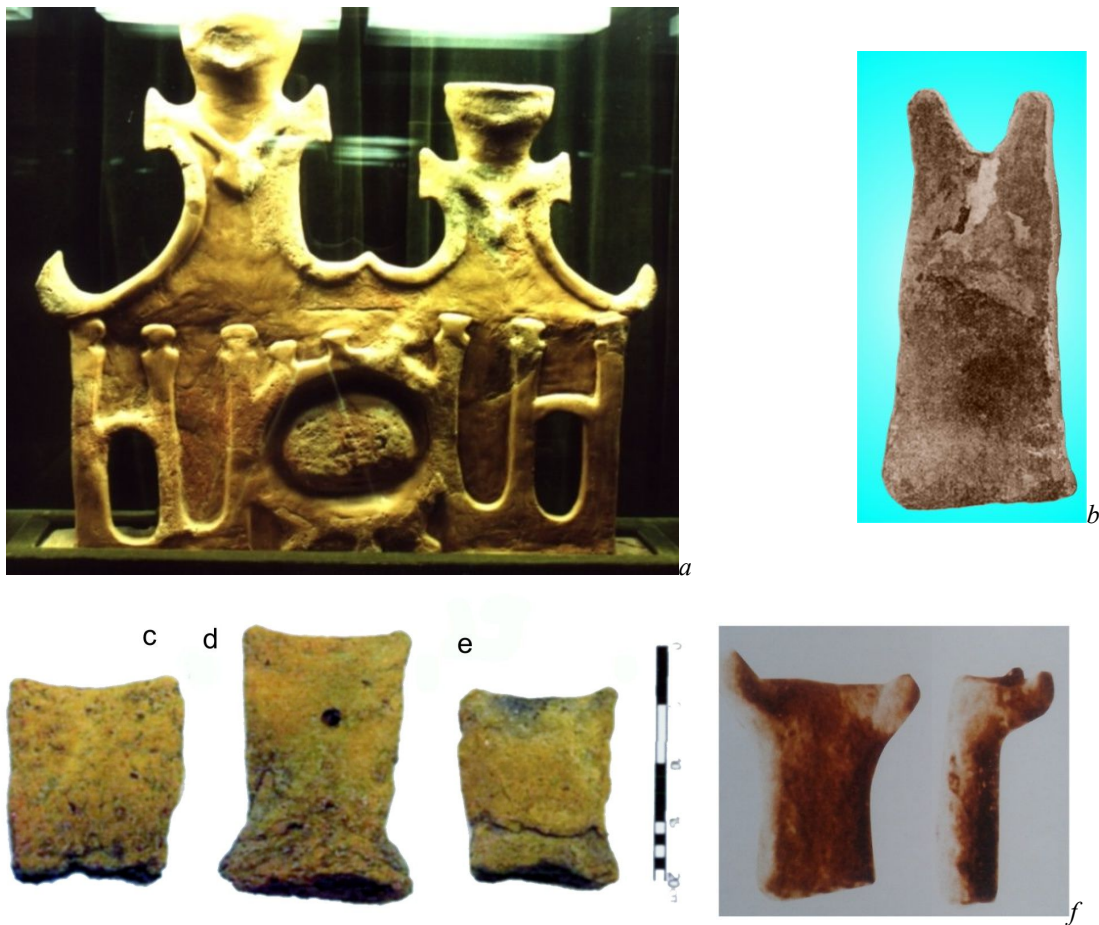


Fig. 32. a, The stela-altar, Trușești-L24, photo Lazarovici Gh.; b, Izvoare (processing Lazarovici Gh.)⁶⁵; c-e, Isaiia, L7/sanctuary 7 (after Ursulescu, Tencariu 2006); f, Okopi (after Zbenović, *Enticlopedia Tripolskoi* 2004).

On the head they have a small cup/bowl for offerings. The association of the Great Mother with the Bull, for the idea of the human genesis, is obvious. The belly/abdomen is being associated with both characters, not just with the great Mother like in Parța. In this case, the Bull is taller and is placed on *the right side* of the altar, playing the role of the divinity, the Mother is on the left, the side belonging to the heart, as in the later on philosophies. In our opinion, we deal here with the obvious notion of *hieros gamos* (the sacred marriage). All the attributes on the column are connected to the fecundity:

- the belly/abdomen between the two characters, a proof in the act of coupling, the three small columns from under the Bull symbolizing the *phalli* are marking the first three months;

⁶⁵ Lazarovici Gh. 2009b, Fig. 26b.

- another three small *phalli* above the belly/abdomen are marking the moment when the baby is starting to move;
- the last three columns from under the Mother are suggesting the role of the mother during procreation.

The second stela from Egypt, in Hierakopolis⁶⁶, shows us the important role played by the bucranium, the bull and the cow during the Egyptian royal times/era, in the myths connected to the world genesis (the sky depicted under the form of a cow, the pharaoh milking the cow, the celestial cow having between the horns the sun and another two horns), the bull Apis has wings (the celestial bull), he has between the horns the Sun and two snakes, the goddess Isis has as an emblem of two horns between which the sun is placed, the same being for the god Honsu and Amon-Ra and others⁶⁷.

⁶⁶ Müller-Karpe 1968, cat. 15 Taf. 26; Hansen 2011, 177, Fig. 31.

⁶⁷ Matie 1958, 15, Fig. 1, 4; the horns of the celestial cow show up also in the case of the Goddess Mert, Fig. 19; Apis, pl. I.1; Isis, pl. II.1, XIII.1; Osiris has on his casque two horns and a sphere, pl. X.3, XIII.2, XX.2 and others XIV.1-2, XV.1.2; for the type of horns see also Golan 2003, 132, Fig. 124, our code B94: bucrania on stela and columns from Nanden.

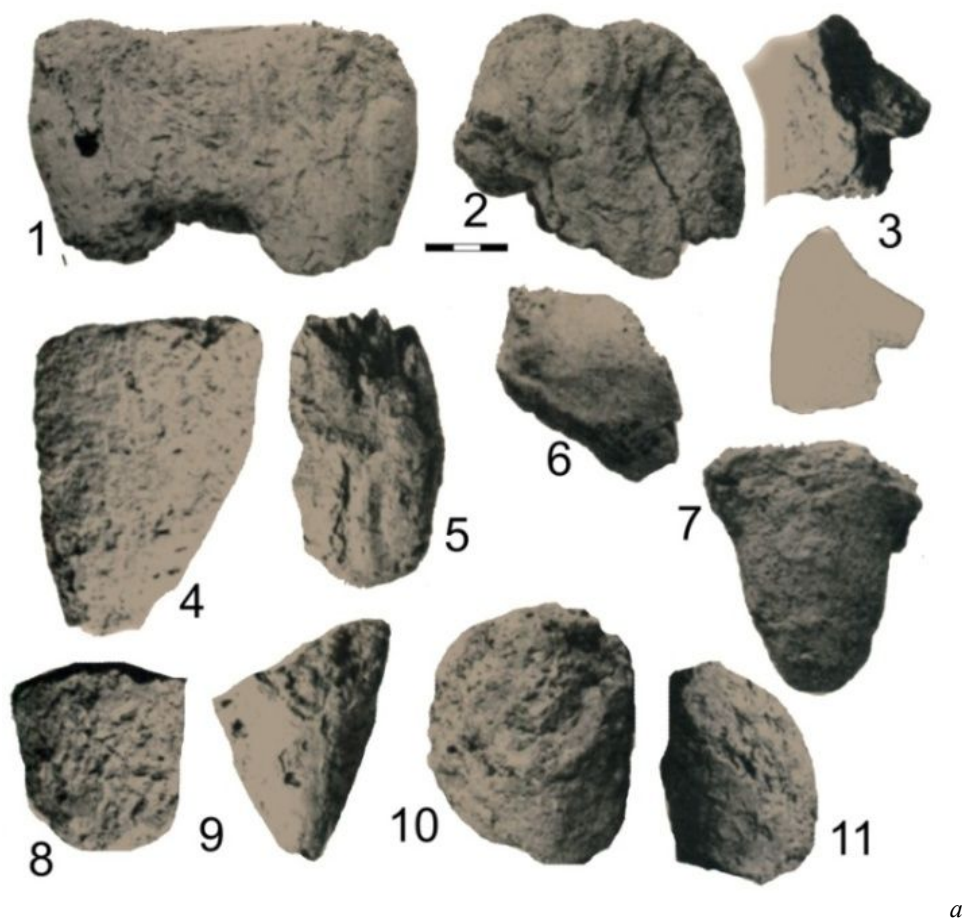


Fig. 32. a, Endrőd (apud Makkay, Starnini 2008) 1, 4, 7, 9 altar feet with bucrania, 11/12 bot; b, Bornaşivka⁶⁸; c, Siria, millennium III.2 (apud ***Idole 1985, cat. 40).



The clay bucrania under the form of a stela had been found in some Cucutenian sanctuaries, how is the case of the one from Isaiia L7 (a domestic sanctuary), belonging to Precucuteni III, where

⁶⁸ *** *Enciclopedia Tripolskoi* 2004, II, 191.

they were found three such stele-bucranium (Fig. 32)⁶⁹. A similar piece with horns is to be found at Benaşivka, in Ukraine⁷⁰. The theme is going to be related then with protohistoric times, where a chariot is pulled by a bull, and the front deck which is supposed to protect the fighter is like a stela with bucranium, having two snake-eyes and a décor made of points (Fig. 32).

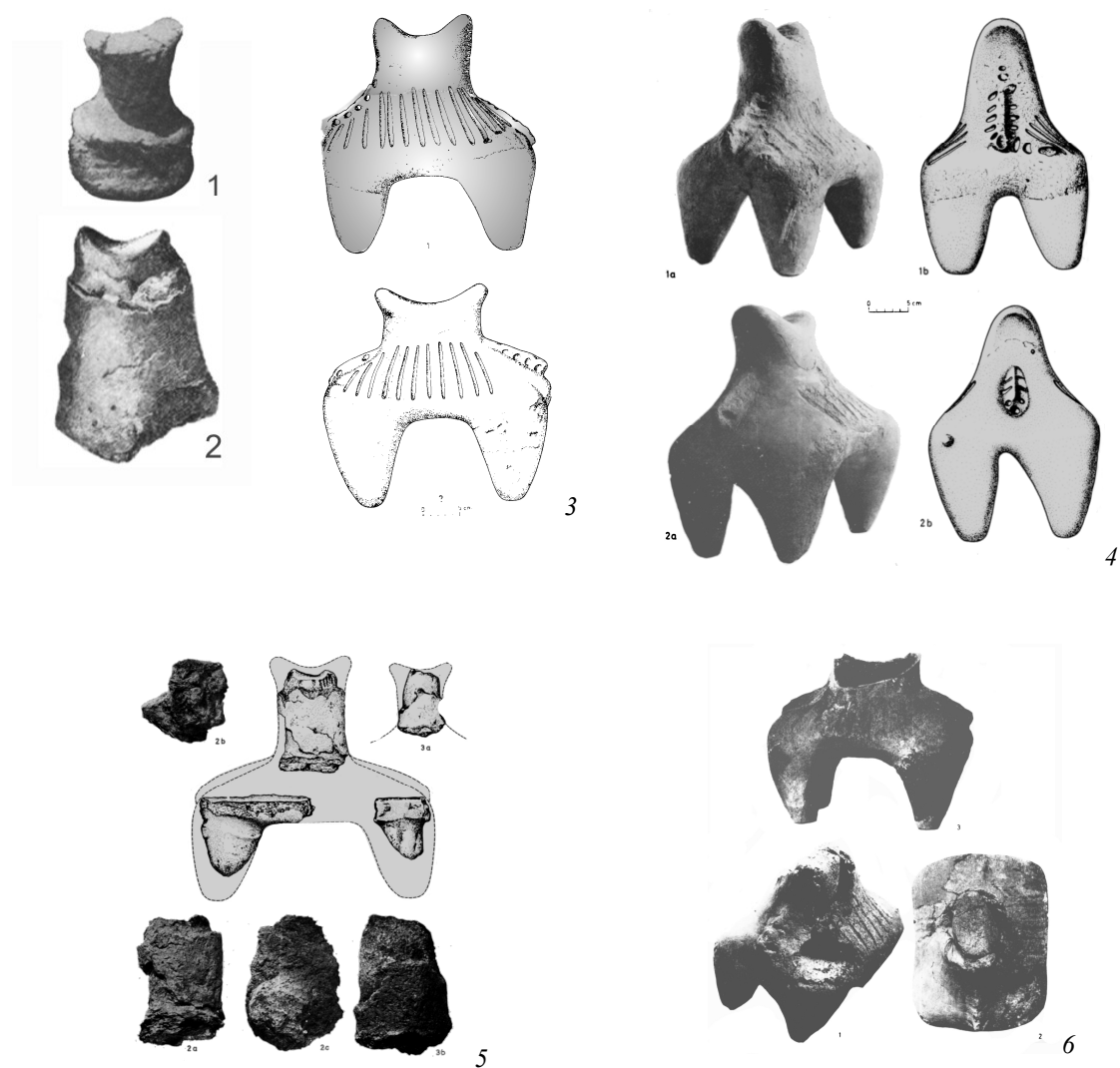


Fig. 33. 1, Tell Azmak; 2, Dudeştii Vechi; 4-6, Szolnok-Szanda, idols-bucrania; 3-6, idols, apud Kalicz, Raczky 1981.

1.d3. Objects, Idols (Fig. 33-34)

These pieces are often monumental but there exist some of small dimensions, too. J. Makkay published recently a series of pieces (Fig. 32) of whose reconstruction is obvious. From the

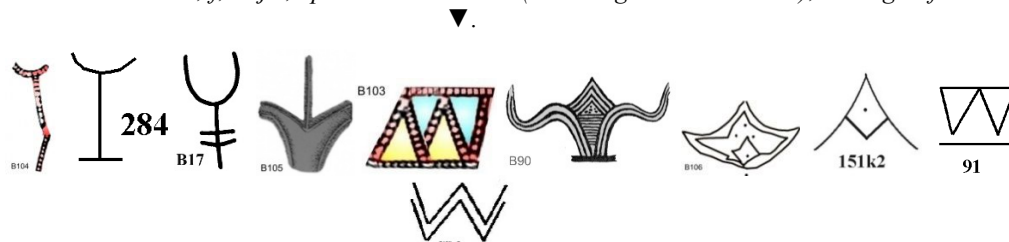
⁶⁹ Ursulescu 2000; Lazarovici Gh. et alii 2001, 289.

⁷⁰ *** *Enciclopedia Tripolskoi* 2004, vol. II, s.v.

studies of N. Kalicz and P. Raczky (Fig. 33), with various examples of such monumental pieces, we believe that these are part of some altars, community sanctuaries or domestic ones.



Fig. 34. a, Veremija (apud *Enciclopedia Tripolskoi* 2004); b, Vinča, apud Merlini 2011; c, Kosovska Mitrovica, apud *PraJugZem* 1979, II, pl. XXXI.5; d, Gura Baciului (photo Lazarovici Gh.); e, Sah'ar Hagolan, bucranium, apud Hansen 2007.2; f, Bajić, apud Hansen 2007.2 (remakings Lazarovici Gh.); analogies for the codes



The oldest idols with horns or zoomorphic idols with a bucranium (sometimes just the horns are present) that we have, date from the Early Neolithic, at the level of Starčevo-Criș-Kőrös, from Gura Baciului (Fig. 34.d), Porodin (Fig. 29.3) or from Dudeștii Vechi (Fig. 33.5)⁷¹, upon

⁷¹ Kalicz, Raczky 1981; Lazarovici Gh. et alii 2001, I.1, 278, Fig. 255/1.

which N. Kalicz and P. Raczky drew the attention, placing them in the same time with the pieces from Szolnok (Fig. 33.1-4) and Endrőd (Fig. 32). Such pieces show up from PPN (Fig. 34e) and they are to be found until the Copper Age (Fig. 34.a-c, f).

It is highly possible that some pieces from the Cucuteni culture, considered to be columns, to belong to some similar type (we are referring to Fig. 31). This suggests a series of analogies for resembling pieces, from different stations in the South-East of Europe (Fig. 29.1-4 and Fig. 33.6-7).

The limited number of such monumental pieces is related to the domestic sanctuaries and these bucrania might be familiar symbols, a sort of familiar totems related to the families of the priestesses/priests or, according to their function, they are giving a familiar totem.

The bucrania from Gura Baciului. The excavations of N. Vlăsa showed up a bull figurine, highly probable the *Bos primigenius* (Fig. 34d), with powerful horns and wide forehead, a situation upon which a lot had been insisted. The pieces of this type relate themselves to the second migration, when the massive/big cattle started to play a role in the spiritual life, together with the bucrania-amulets. However, at Gura Baciului there are no such amulets of the bucranium type or in the form of a „T”.

At Kosovska Mitrovica, the variant Kosovo - Fafos I of the Vinča culture, there is a male figure with a head or a masque with ram horns⁷²; a protoma or an idol head having horns of a ram or a bull can be also found at Zelenikovo II⁷³. From Sah'ar Hagolan (Fig. 34e) comes an idol which has on its back a bucranium from which starts a column/stem (or the tail of the double axe, according to a usual association). Its form reminds us of the perforated idols from Zorlențu Mare and some other pieces⁷⁴. On another idol from Bajić⁷⁵, on its back, there is the well-known “W” sign (Fig. 34.f) but also other motifs, sometimes the symbol of the horns, often associated with the bucranium (Fig. 29-30); even the décor on the back is suggesting the columns with bucrania (3-4 columns in a group) and the “W” motif, which is ending the bucrania (our marking in yellow) (see Fig. 34 the codes).

Replicas of the houses/sanctuaries, small altars as lamps, fireplaces

The form and functionality of such replicas can be multiple, as shown by the title. Often, we made references to them as being the replicas of some community sanctuaries or some familiar

⁷² ****PraJugZem* 1979, II, pl. XXXI.5.

⁷³ ****PraJugZem* 1979, II, pl. XXXVII.1.

⁷⁴ Lazarovici Gh. 1979, the typology and analogies, 94-100, pl. XXI-XXII and the old bibliography, too.

⁷⁵ apud Hansen 2007.2, Taf. 30.1, 527.1.

ones, precisely belonging to the altar of some priestesses. Inside them, the spirits of the divinities find their place when they are invoked.

Many of such replicas have on their pediment/front side, on the ridge of the house or on the side-walls a series of elements in which the cult of the bucranium plays the dominant role. The form of the piece is important. In the Platar collection there is a series of objects, many of which being a result of poaching and some might be counterfeited. Apart from these risks, we notice two categories of situations: one represents the miniature dwellings/sanctuaries (Fig. 35, 37-41⁷⁶); the other depicts two bucrania of a bull put to the yoke.

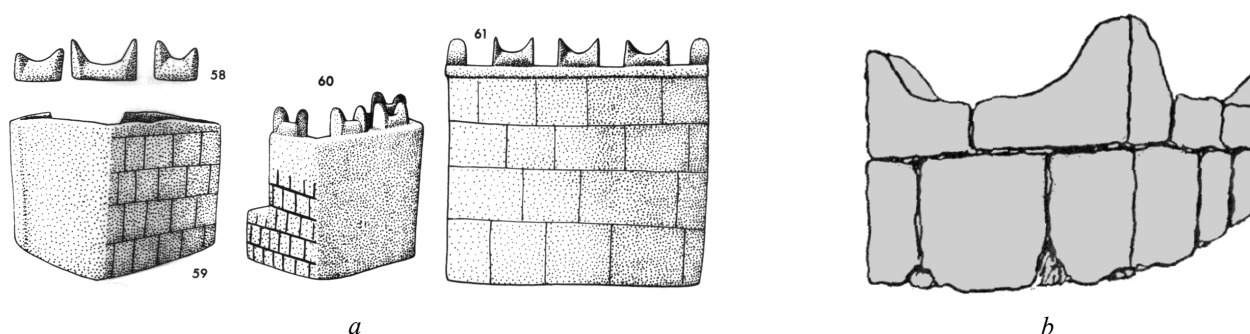
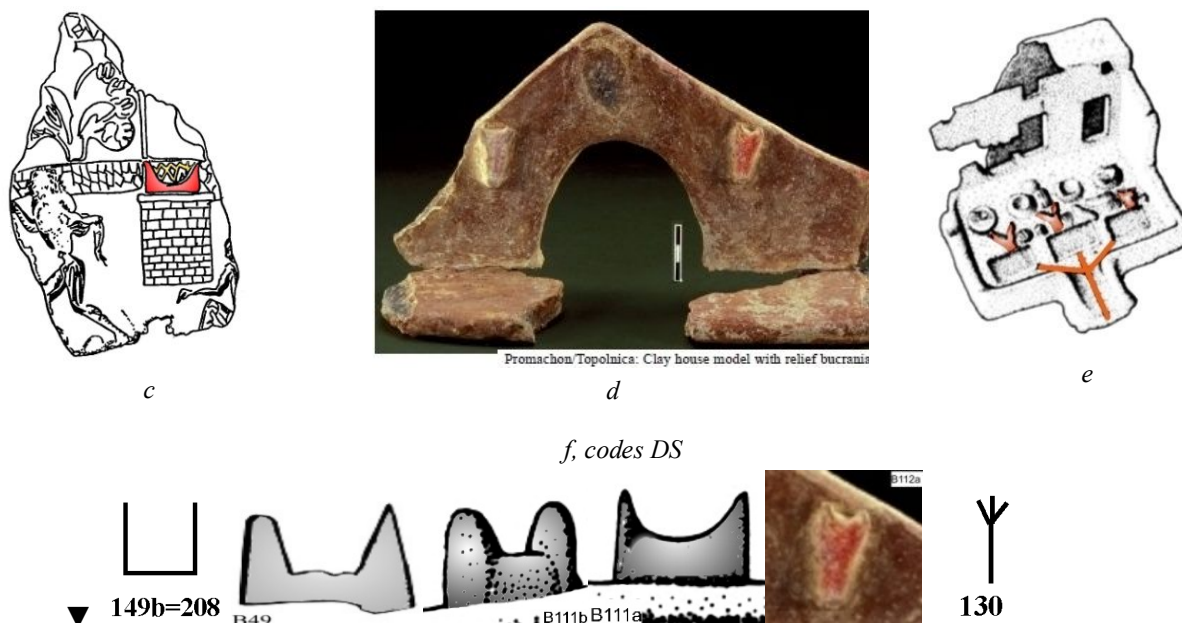
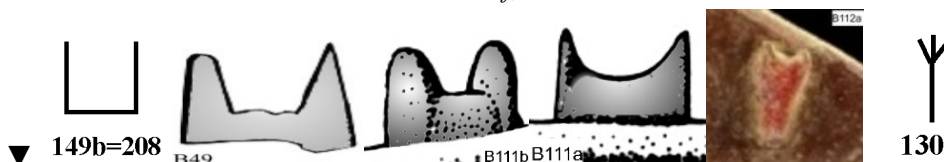


Fig. 36. Replicas with bucranias and bucranias, Creta, Knossos, apud Müller-Karpe 1974; b, Israel, apud Golan 2003, 130, Fig. 122.9 from the cent. 8 BC; c, Illahun; d, Promahon-Topolnica; e, Rife, Egypt.



f, codes DS



⁷⁶ *** Cucuteni-Trypillia 2008, catalogues for the codes: U83, U 84, U85, U87, U94, U102, U122, U123, U124, U125, U 126, U127, U129, U130, U131, U132.

Actually, they are suggesting the idea of carrying the “cartful with light”. Using the bull for transporting or ploughing/tilling the earth had been already proven⁷⁷. At Promachon – Topolnica (Fig. 36d)⁷⁸, Knossos (Fig. 36a)⁷⁹, in Egypt, at Rife and Illahun (Fig. 36c, e⁸⁰), but also on some other cult miniature dwellings, the horn/horns and the bucranium are representing a frequent element.

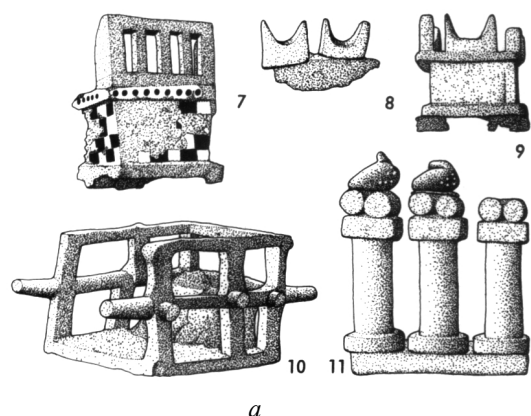


Fig. 37. a, Crete, Knossos.



b, Vounas, in green, mythical ancestor with horns.

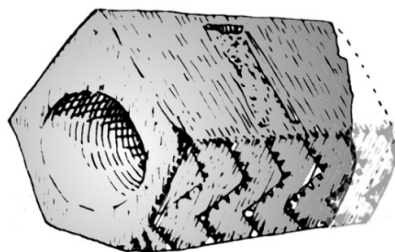


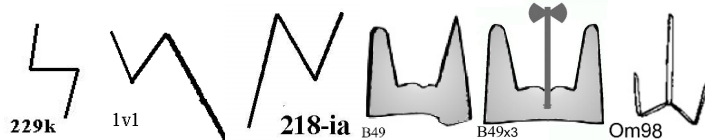
Fig. 38. a, Spanțov, the Spanțov phase, apud Șerbănescu 1997;



b, Khania, Crete, apud Gimbutas 1989, 274, Fig. 431, Late Minoic phase;



c, Voroșilovka, apud Enciclopedia Tripolskoi 2004.



⁷⁷ Gheție, Mateescu 1973.

⁷⁸ Dikili Tash, Papadopoulos, Nerantzis 2014, Fig. 11-12.

⁷⁹ Picard 1948, 61, 64; Gimbutas 1984, 75, 78, Fig. 30.

⁸⁰ Müller-Karpe 1974, Rife.

Being placed on the ridge of the roof, we may think about the significations of the bull connected with the astral cult (thunder-lowing/mooing, horn-storm, light over the altars and small altars), having the role of protecting the house from the thunderbolt/lightning or sending to the idea of the union between the Great Mother with the Bull, the **Celestial Bull**⁸¹ (see above the sanctuaries, altars, columns). Interesting is the situation from Promachon-Topolnica⁸² (Fig. 36d), where the two bucrania on the pediment/front side had been colored: in red (symbol of fire, love), so the earthly bull, placed on the left; and with yellow (light, sun), so the celestial bull, placed on the right. This shows us that many of the ancient beliefs had been taken by the Christian religion: the left side is symbolizing the humanly, the left one, the divine/heavenly.

The bucrania are placed on the superior part of the replicas, on the column (Fig. 37.11, 40a) or on the columns ending in horns (Fig. 40a). Interesting and suggestive are their associations on the replicas with grinder (Fig. 39, 40b), with vessels (Fig. 39, 40b) or the entrance that has the form of a bucranium (Fig. 40c).

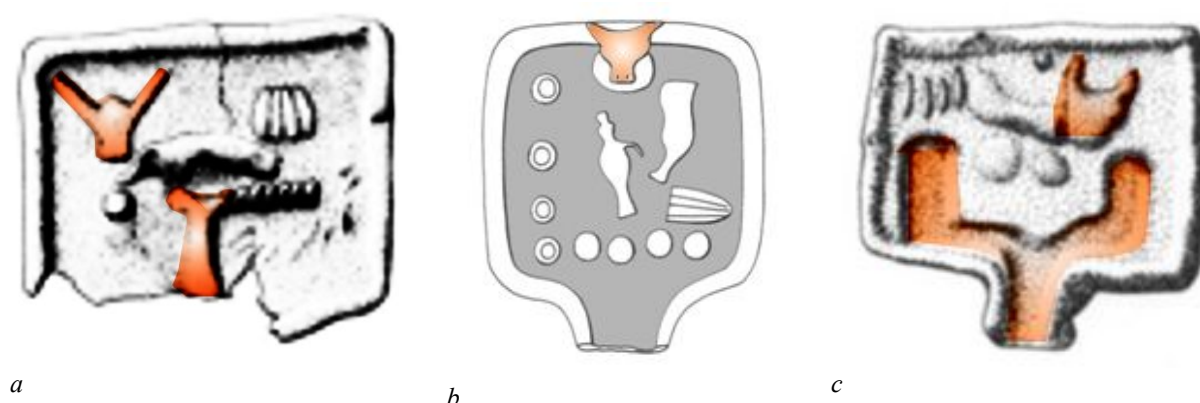
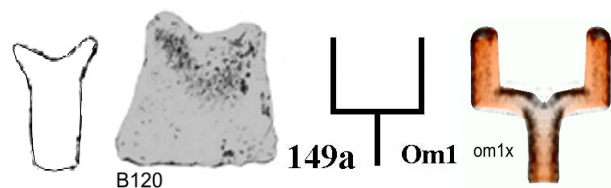


Fig. 40. Egypt, symbols with bucrania: a, c, Rife, b, Illahun.



One of the best-known legends is belonging to the Minotaur, from the Cretan civilization and the Cycladic one, where the bull, especially the bucranium, is depicted on the replicas. In other mythologies, in Egypt, at Rife and Illahun, the bucranium appears in different situations (Fig. 39-

⁸¹ Karageorghis 1977, 39; Eliade 1981, 48 *the sacred semen/sperm*: Lazarovici Gh. et alii 2001, 278-279, Fig. 256; Chirica V., Văleanu 2008, 123 ff.

⁸² Treuil, Tsirtsoni 2000, 216, Fig. 2.

40⁸³). Therefore, the projection of some mythological meanings, similar for the discoveries from the Neolithic and the Copper Age, the mythological themes related to the bucranium, the bull head, the bull horns, the cult of the bull, is more than obvious.

The uranian bull shows up in various mythologies⁸⁴. As we have seen before, the bucrania are guarding the entrance or the ridge of the replicas (Fig. 41), on the pediment/front side above the entrance (Fig. 38, 41b), having in this case the role of protecting the construction or the entrance. The symbol often associated with the bucranium is the snake (Fig. 41c).

For cultivating some of the legends, toys are being made, a part of them having the bucrania (Fig. 41b, d). Also related to the light and to keeping the fire are the altars with a concavity for liquid (oils, bee wax) in which there appear two bucrania suggesting maybe a “light chariot” (Fig. 41f, 42a, c, e). The idea of a chariot might come even from such a toy (Fig. 42b), where a bull is fixed on four wheels and from another piece that has in front of it some holes for pulling or for the wheel (Fig. 42d).

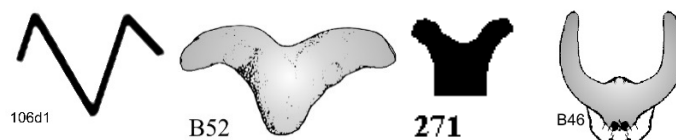


⁸³ There exist some others, too: Müller-Karpe 1974, pl. 123/1-3, 5-8, 10-14, 16.

⁸⁴ Evseev 1989, 456 ff., the bull and its symbols appear in: the Prearyan India, Ancient Egypt, Minoan Greece, China etc.; Gimbutas 1999, the Minoan civilization, 141-142.



Fig. 41. Replicas of sanctuaries from the Trypillia culture: a-e, the Platar collection, apud *Enticlopedia Tripolskoi* 2004.



Some are considered replicas of sleighs, which is possible, but they have also a functional usage as a lamp. Actually, the blackened lip from some of them might be an argument for using them as lamps (Fig. 43). Many of the sanctuary replicas from the Boian and Gumelnița cultures have on their ridges the bucrania (Fig. 44c, f)⁸⁵.

The entrance of the two sanctuary replicas from Ghelăești is in the form of a bucranium, by lifting their margins upwards⁸⁶. On one of the replica (Ghelăești 1), on its four sides, is placed the symbol of a great “S” in a lying position (Fig. 45).

Besides, such entrances can be found to some of the replicas from Ukraine, as part of the Trypillia culture⁸⁷.

⁸⁵ Dumitrescu H. 1968; 1973, 311-316; Gimbutas 1984, 71, 76, Fig. 42.1; Șerbănescu 1997, 235, Fig. 2/4; 4/2; apud Andreescu 2002, 16-17; Monah 1997, 34, 48; Lazarovici C.-M. 2004, Fig. 31 etc.

⁸⁶ Cucoș 1993, 59-80; Monah 1997, 47, 12/4-6, 14-3; ****Cucuteni* 1997, cover 1, 216-217, cat. 154-157.

⁸⁷ *** *Enticlopedia Tripolskoi* 2004.II, Popudnia 3.



a



b

Fig. 42. Replicas of a sanctuary, Ghelăești, the Cucuteni culture (apud ***Cucuteni 2009).



a

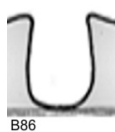


b

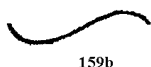


-c▶

Fig. 43: a, Petsofas, 5 bucrania; b, Micene, 5 bucrania, 3 with 2 columns; c, Knossos (apud Torcică 2012, 68, pl. V.8-10); codes ▼.



B86



159b



227_23



189d1



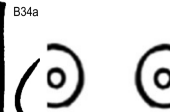
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B49



B34



B34a

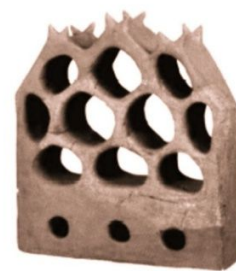
43y



a



b



c

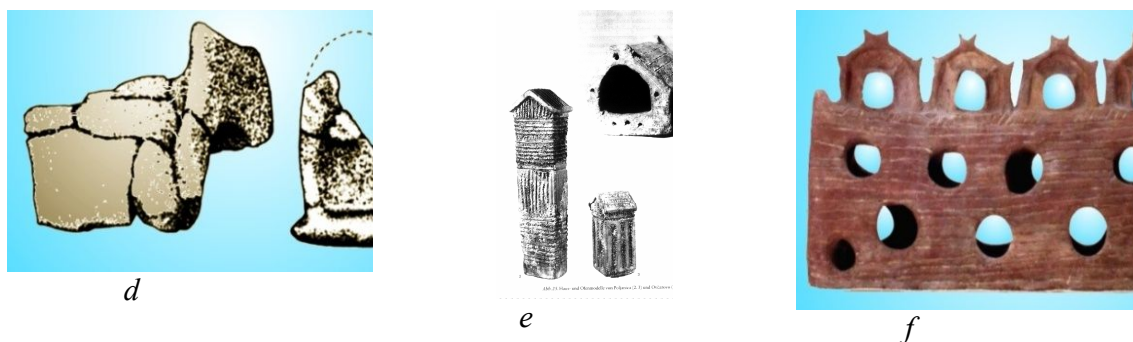


Fig. 44. Replicas of sanctuaries: a, Porodin (photo Lazarovici Gh.); b, Turdaş, remaking Lazarovici Gh.; c, Olteniţa (apud Lazarovici Gh. et alii 2011); d, Boskovstein, apud Müller-Karpe 1968; e, Poljanica apud Todorova, Vajsov 1993; f, Căscioarele, apud Şerbănescu 1997.

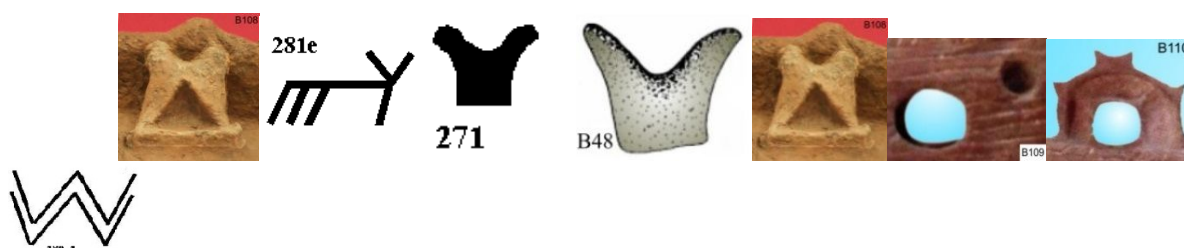


Fig. 45. The Celestial Bull and the earthly one, among them being the Moon?

house, fire, light (Fig. 46). Actually, this dualism of the main divinities is also met in the case of the snake, and in Parţa and Truşeşti, but also in some other cases, we have seen that the Bull is the acolyte of the divinity the Great Mother⁸⁹.

⁸⁸ Chirica V., Văleanu 2008.

⁸⁹ Mother Goddess gives birth to the bull: Eliade 1981, 47; Frazer 1980, III, 80-81; Roşu 1980, 343; Monah, Cucos 1985, 156; Sandars 1985, 201; Lazarovici Gh. et alii 2001, 271, 276, 278, 279, 282, 292.

Small altars and lamps with bucrania

These are a category of pieces with a functional role, of keeping the fire and the light but also with cultic meanings, of maintaining the sacred fire. They are part of the domestic altars. The symbols placed on them are suggesting the divinities to which offerings are being made, through fire and light, or to protect the fire, and their presence inside the domestic altars is enlarging the protection over the house and family.



Fig. 46. Idols and lamp-altars: a, Bordiș⁹⁰; b, Hotărâni⁹¹, the culture of Vădastra II⁹².

Some of them are painted in red (Fig. 50a) – symbol of fire, power, force, love etc.⁹³; others are painted or the incisions are encrusted in white (sometimes, due to oxidation, it becomes yellow but it has the same meaning) - symbol of light (the Sunrise/East, the Sunset/West), of purity/innocence (Fig. 49), of the passing by/transition, initiation and others⁹⁴.

In many of these cases, some parts are deliberately broken in order to stop their usage because those parts were very thick and they could not break easily (Fig. 51.1). It is possible that this breaking/smashing be related to some magic practices, noticed in the case of some funerary inventories or of the sacred effigies⁹⁵.

⁹⁰ Müller-Karpe 1968, Vol. II, Kat. 138, taf. 153.D, and the bibl.

⁹¹ Vădastra III, Hansen 2007.2, Taf. 209/2.

⁹² Nichita 2012, cat. 165.

⁹³ Chevalier, Gheerbrant 1995, s.v.

⁹⁴ Chevalier, Gheerbrant 1995, s.v.; Gimbutas 1991, 21.

⁹⁵ Exemple: Paul 1992, 103; Monah 1997, 202-203, at Luka Vrublevețkaia; Lazarovici C.-M., Lazarovici Gh. 2006, 96; the inventory from the Lady of Tărtăria; Lazarovici Gh. et alii 2001, 103; Merlini 2011, 106, 109, 135, 136 147, pl. VIIB.23-26; Popa 2009, 773.

The broken part sometimes suggests to whom the magic connection/relation is being addressed. The events which determine this smashing or ritual breakings⁹⁶ might have multiple causes, but many remain unknown. For example: when a person is dying, some objects are suffering a ritual breaking, like in the case of the dying priestess (the case of the *Lady of Tărtăria*⁹⁷), some are being buried with the deceased, but the other parts of those objects had not been found at all.



Fig. 47. Altar with bull bucrania: a, Turdaş (photo Lazarovici Gh.); b, Potporani⁹⁸.

The form of the horns is different, sometimes having a realist depiction, being present even the wrinkles on the horns (Fig. 52.3). The horns are sharp (Fig. 51.2), some are massive (Fig. 52), others are just being suggested (Fig. 50b, 51.1). Sometimes even the figurines placed on the throne, having in their lap an open vessel (Fig. 50c), may be considered domestic sanctuaries or a part of them.

A study about the zoomorphic/animal small altars used as lamps was made by J. Makkay⁹⁹. J. Nandriş suggested their usage as lamps¹⁰⁰ and recently some other authors considered this being their usage¹⁰¹.

⁹⁶ There are broken the parts related to an unfulfilled wish or to the invoking of a wish or need: the case with the Goddess with the red tresses of hair from Donja Branjevina: Karmanski 1989, Fig. 5 cover 1, 4; 1989-1993. Curtesy of Serghei Karmanski, Gh. Lazarovici had analyzed the pit with the ritual deposit. The legs were broken from the thighs and placed under the shoulders, and the face of the statue was upwards, looking to the sky. The legs were suggesting the orant position. The statue was found in the central area of the level having the dwellings with pillars, SC IIA-IIB, in our opinion: see our reconstruction Lazarovici C.-M, Lazarovici Gh. 2006, Fig. II.12.

⁹⁷ Lazarovici Gh. et alii 2001, 103.

⁹⁸ Draşovean 2001, 46, cat. 98

⁹⁹ Makkay 1959, some with bucrania: Fig. 5, pl. XXIII.5-6, XXV.6.

¹⁰⁰ In London, at the Institute of Archaeology, he made those lamps for the seminaries of ethno-archeology.

¹⁰¹ Băcuet Crişan et alii 2012.

There are a lot of such pieces having on their edge one or more bucrania (Fig. 51.2), usually a bull bucranium (Fig. 50a, 51.1, 42.a, c), but also the ram bucranium (Fig. 51.2, 53.1-2¹⁰²), the he-goat (Fig. 54.1, Iaša Tepe¹⁰³) or an unprecise animal (Fig. 50b). The ram often replaces the bull in the representations from the Late Neolithic. A special situation is the piece from Turdaș (Fig. 51.1), where, after the breaking of its head, there appear various breaches on the edges of the cup (the alveolus for the liquid).

Often, the décor is like a meander and in some situations there appear signs which can be related with the cult of light¹⁰⁴. The décor from the altars lasts from the Vinča A (Fig. 50a) until the Vinča C phase (Fig. 48-50, 52), transmitting itself to the derived civilizations (Turdaș, Fig. 47) or adjacent/neighbors ones, how is the case of the Tisa culture, which develops this motif in the textile style, how the specialists have usually explained.



Fig. 48. Vinča-BB, 7 m, Vasić the cut 721, apud Nenad Tasić.



Fig. 49. Balkans, Schier, Drașovean 2005, 68, cat. 18.

¹⁰² Altars with a ram head or decoration with horns: Hansen 2007.2, Taf. 264.6, 8; 265.

¹⁰³ Müller-Karpe 1968, Taf. 155.D10; Todorova 2003, 322, Fig. 15.E

¹⁰⁴ Lazarovici Gh., Lazarovici C.-M. 2014, 215-217, Fig. 10, 53-54, 56.

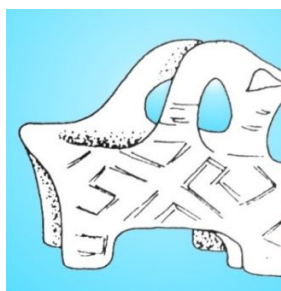


a



b

Fig. 50. Small altars - lamps: a-b, Gornea, Vinča A (photo Lazarovici Gh).



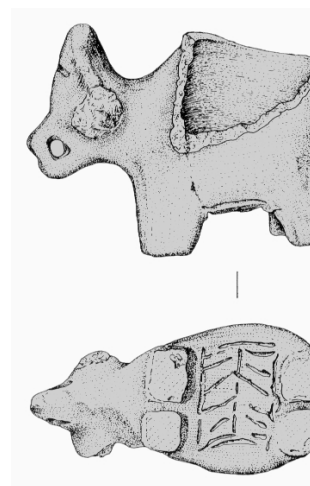
1



2▲▼



4



3

Fig. 51. 1, Rudna Glava (apud Jovanović); 2a-b, the Tisa culture, the museum from Szeged (apud Horváth 2000); 3, the culture of the linear pottery, apud Lichardus 1989, Taf. 16.1; 4, apud Todorova, Vaisov 1993 (133, Fig. 133a).



1



2

Fig. 52. Lamps, Macedonia, the Early Neolithic: 1, Veluška; 2, Stence.

Also connected with the light are the lamp-small altars from Macedonia, the Pelagonia area, of whose openings allow the light to be seen in the form of some turned horns (Stence, Fig. 52.2¹⁰⁵, Veluška, Fig. 52.14¹⁰⁶).

There are also zoomorphic vessels ending in animal heads or bucrania, some used as lamps (below, Fig. 104-105) or maybe for preserving/keeping liquids that were to be burned. Of course, the place of these objects was in the area of the domestic altar, at hand, but also seen as a sacred place.



Fig. 53.1, Balta Sărată (photo Lazarovici Gh.); 2-3, apud Stanković 1992, pl. III.12-13, group 2; 4, Kotocpart Vata, apud Kutzián 1944¹⁰⁷; 5-6, Zalaszentbalasz, the Lengyel culture¹⁰⁸; 7, Gornea, Vinča A; 8, Vinkovci, Starčevo-Criș, apud *** PraJugoZem 1979, II; 9, Balkans, unknown place;

¹⁰⁵ Zdrankovski 2004, kat. 16; 2006, 107, Fig. 9.

¹⁰⁶ Jási Tepe, Müller-Karpe 1968, Taf. 155.D10.

¹⁰⁷ Kutzián 1944, pl. XXXV.2, the Körös culture.

¹⁰⁸ *** Hungarian Archaeology IV. Neolithic, Zalaszentbalasz, the Lengyel culture, Fig. 24.

10, signs and symbols from Fig. 47-54▼.

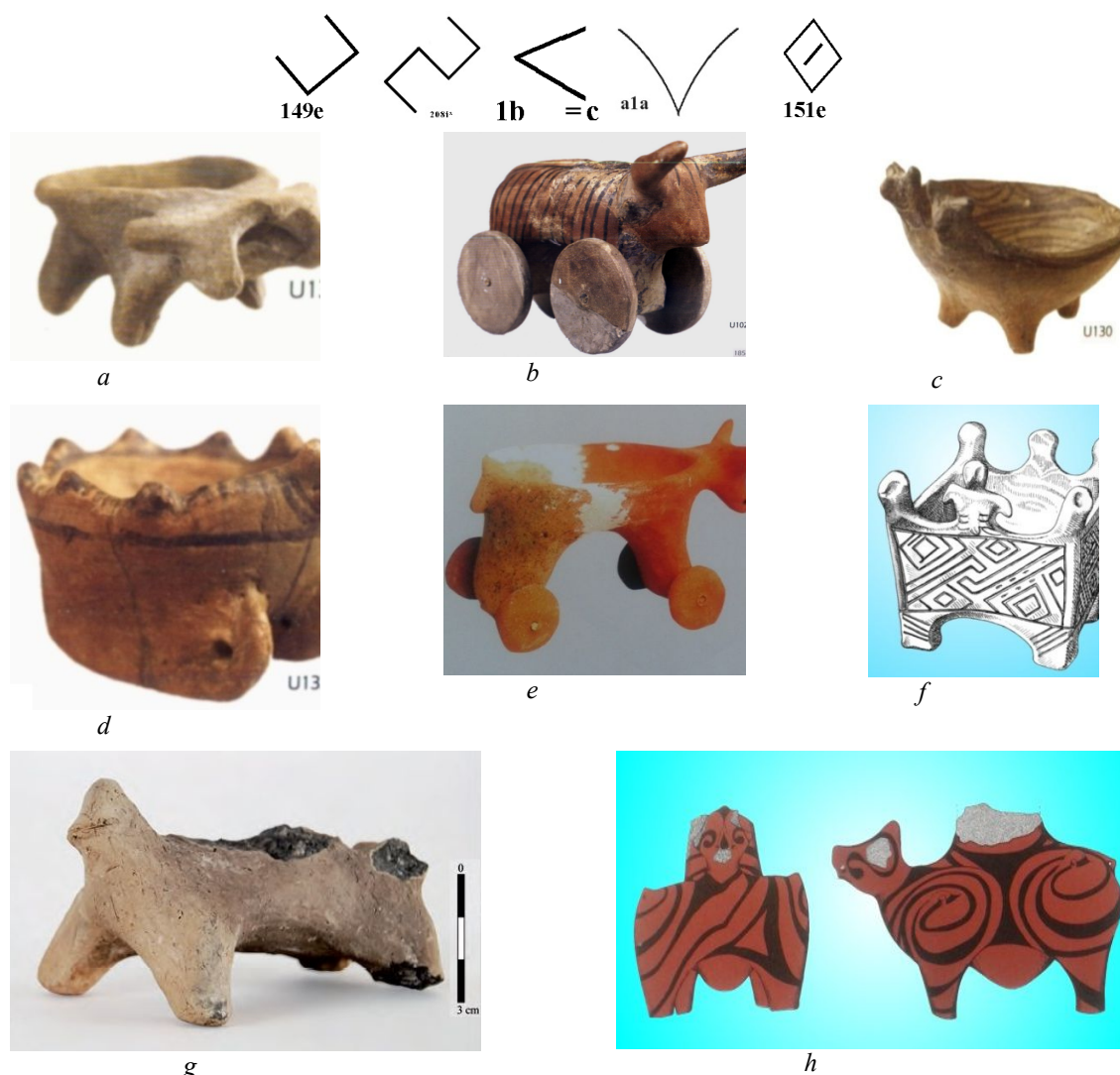


Fig. 54. Bucrania on: a, c-e, g, h, small altars – lamps; b, lamp - cart; b, d, toys, lamps – sleighs; a-e, apud *Enciclopedia Tripolskoi* 2004; f, *Gradešnica*, altar with human figure and bucrania; g, *Alsónék -Bátaszék*¹⁰⁹; h, apud *Gimbutas* 1982, 67.

We may notice on some of the altars the presence of some signs and symbols. The signification of some symbols had been analyzed by us, starting from the Early Neolithic until the Copper Age/Eneolithic 2 (the eye, the Sun-Moon, the breasts, the wolf, the snake, the meanders, the triangles etc.)¹¹⁰. The signs are related to the light, fire, heat, sexuality etc.

¹⁰⁹ Banffy et alii 2014.

¹¹⁰ Maxim 1999, 204-209 types and symbols; Lazarovici Gh. et alii 2001, 271-274; Lazarovici Gh. 2004; 2009; 2009a, tab. 6b, 9; Lazarovici Gh., Lazarovici C.-M. 2014; Lazarovici C.-M. 2006.

On one of the altars from the Starčevo-Criș culture there appears a horn on the corner of the altar and two cuts that suggest a masque with a horn (Fig. 54.5)¹¹¹. At Madžari, there is a lamp-altar (Fig. 52.1) resembling the ones with a pedestal from Serbia and some other areas, but which is representing a bull with horns (called also the *centaur*¹¹²), suggesting the bull that brings/carries the light. On the box-altar from Gradešnica, a central human figure is framed by five stylized bucrania but it is hard to mention the type of animal (Fig. 54.3).



Fig. 55. 1-3, Altars with horns, Madžari apud Zdravkovski 2004; 3, Vinča, apud Stanković 1992; 4, the Trypillia culture, apud Enciclopedia Tripolskoi 2004, II, 192; 5, Gornea-Căunița; 6, Vinča B1, Stanković Sv. 1992 pl. V. gr 3 7 m., ; 7. Vinča B1, Stanković Sv Tab. II cat. 5 7,5 m.

¹¹¹ Stanković 1992, group 2, pl. III.13.

¹¹² Zdravkovski 2004, kat. 158.

In Macedonia, on various altars appears the bucranium under the form of some triangles (Fig. 54.1-3).

Fireplaces with horns and in the form of a bucranium

We have seen above at the stela, sanctuaries etc. the association of the bucranium with the fireplace and the column, this issue being analyzed by us in various occasions, just like some other authors¹¹³. These associations represent a characteristic/particular feature of various sanctuaries (see above Fig. 4-8), monumental pieces and replicas (Fig. 10-16, 30, 31, 40).

The fireplace is considered to be a symbol of the shared life, of the home/house. Around the fireplace the family is gathering. The fireplace is giving light and heat. The ethnologists consider that the fireplace is also a symbol for *"...the union between the man and the woman, of love, of joining the fire with what it contains... while being a solar center, reuniting the beings through its light and warmth... it is the place where the food is made, it is the center of life... which lasts and perpetuates itself... becoming a sanctuary"*¹¹⁴ on which the God's protection is being invoked, where the cult is celebrated and where the sacred statues and images are being kept"¹¹⁵. This definition allows us to understand the associations between the fireplace and the bucranium, fireplace and horn. These ideas were born starting from the Neolithic and the Copper Age, as we may see accordingly to the variants and aspects below. On the fireplace the sacrifices/offerings are being made to the celestial divinities. In this case, the bull, partner of the Great Mother, as we have seen above in Parța, is the symbol of fecundity and fertility. We may notice below that in numerous cases the fireplace is destroyed, is broken (Fig. 56.c, e-g, i), like in the case of the portable fireplaces and other objects from the cult complexes¹¹⁶.

In order to reach such definitions, thousand generations have given to the fireplace forms that produced new features/attributes, which we may find in the synthesis of the ethnologists. The association with the bucranium, with the horn behind which is the bull, especially the cosmic bull,

¹¹³ Dumitrescu Vl. 1971; 1986, *** *Sanctuaries and Cult 1981*; Leuven 1981; Mareș 1993; Ursulescu 2002; Lazarovici C.-M. 2004; 2010; 2010a; Lazarovici C.-M., Lazarovici Gh. 2006; 2007; Lazarovici Gh., Lazarovici C.-M. 2003; 2008a; 2008b; 2009; 2010; 2010a; 2010b; Burdo 2010; Mateș 2010; Kovács A. 2014.

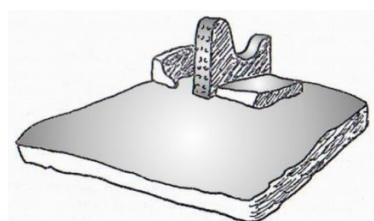
¹¹⁴ At Ghirbom, the fireplace serves as a sanctuary: Aldea 1974, 40-47, Fig. 1-4; Paul 1992, 107-108; Lazarovici Gh., Lazarovici C.-M. 2003, 478, Fig. 121; Lazarovici C.-M., Lazarovici Gh. 2007, 57-58, Fig. Va.30; Mateș 2010; the same at Trușești, Petrescu-Dîmbovița et alii 1999, 85-88, 65.

¹¹⁵ Chevalier, Gheerbrant 1995, chimney, fireplace.

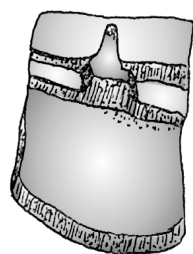
¹¹⁶ Ruginoasa, Dwelling 3: Lazarovici C.-M., Lazarovici Gh. 2012, 125, 135, 212-214, 285, Fig. 171-174; Parța, Sanctuary 2 the Eastern room: Lazarovici C.-M., Lazarovici Gh. 2006, 96, 306-309, 360; Merlini 2011, 106, 125, 135, 146 etc.

the celestial bull is related to the fecundity and fertility. Dragoslav Srejšović considered the fireplace a vital force, having human features¹¹⁷, sometimes depicting the Mother with her child, sometimes, under it, actually in the fireplace of the house, being buried persons or children, it may have sculptures, in Dwelling 23 from Lepenski Vir being depicted the hunting scene with the bucranium¹¹⁸.

In Anatolia, the traditions left from Çatal Höyük are also met in other stations/settlements from the same time, but also later on, when the idea of the sacrifices made to the gods, on the fireplaces, is being associated with the stele or columns (Fig. 56a, b) or with bucrania. Our images are taken from a synthesis study signed by St. Diamant and J. Rutter, about Anatolia and the Middle East¹¹⁹.



a,
*Kusura, fireplace, room VII, LB, apud
Diamant, Rutter 1969, 153, Fig. 5*



b

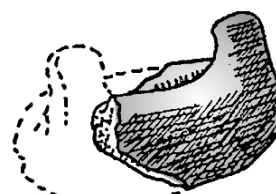


FIG. 19. Mersin.
Level XIV, Room 165.

c

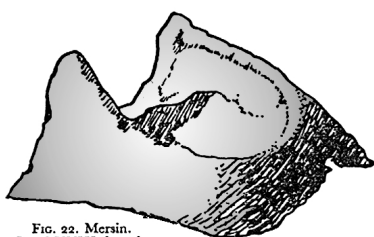


FIG. 20. Mersin.
Level XIII, Room 163.

d

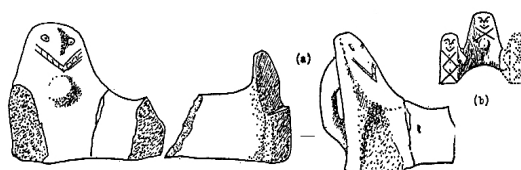


FIG. 22. Tabara el Akred.

e

Tabara el Akred, apud Diamant, Rutter 1969, Fig. 12b



FIG. 20. Mersin.
Level XIII, Room 163.

f

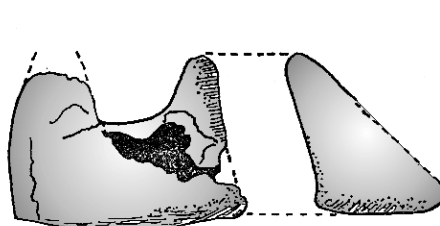


FIG. 21. Mersin. Level XII, Room 112.

g

¹¹⁷ Srejšović 1969, Pl. 3, 6, 11, 16-18, 20, 23, 29 32, 35, 36; Fig. 9-10 etc.

¹¹⁸ Srejšović 1969, Fig. 75-76.

¹¹⁹ Diamant, Rutter 1969.

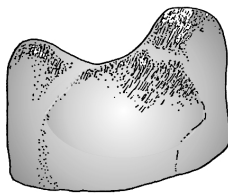


FIG. 30. Tarsus. Unstratified. Scale 1 : 3.

h

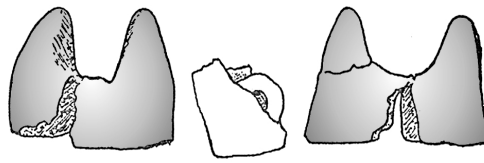


FIG. 29. Alishar. EB levels (especially 6M).

i

Alishar, the Bronze Age

Fig. 56. Bucrania and fireplaces with horns from Anatolia and Middle East.

These situations repeat themselves in a large variety of forms, some of them being common (Fig. 56h-j), others, unique (Fig. 57f). Some images are to be found throughout the Danubian civilizations, on altars or protomes.

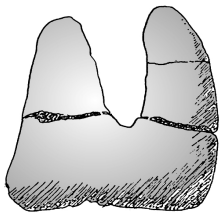


FIG. 28. Tell Brak. Period of Eye Temple. Scale 7 : 10.

a, Tell Brak during the time of the White Temple

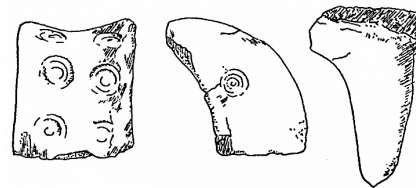


FIG. 26. Nuzi. Hurrian period.

d



FIG. 27. Nuzi. Hurrian period. Scale 2 : 5 (left).

e



FIG. 25. Nuzi. Level X. Scale 1 : 5 (right).

c

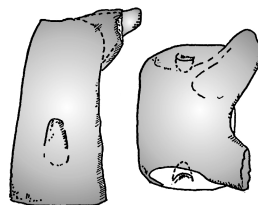


FIG. 31. Beycesultan, Level II.

f

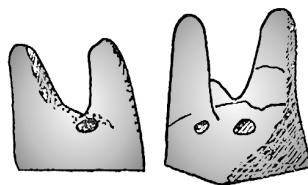


FIG. 36. Mochlos. EM I. Scale 1 : 5.

g

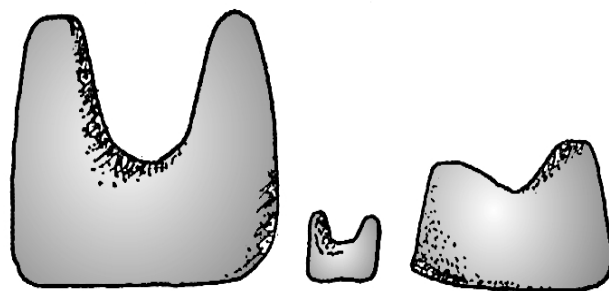


FIG. 38. Roussolakkos. Unstratified. Scale 1 : 4.

h, Roussolakkos

Fig. 57. Fireplaces with horns and bucrania.

On the edge of the protome in the form of horns sometimes appears a stylized figure, often considered as being human (Fig. 56e, from Tabara el Akred); if we analyze its large/wide-open mouth, we may notice that the image resembles the figure of a bull. Next to other horns from altars, fireplaces or other situations, there are depicted big circular eyes, as it is the case from Kusura (Fig. 57b), belonging to the Bronze Age¹²⁰, but also in some other situations (Fig. 57.f).

We also notice some other types of fireplaces where the horns, analyzed sideways/from the profile, are expressing by no doubt the form of the bucranium (Fig. 57). We notice on these fireplaces the strong/powerful wish of symbolizing the features of the bucranium through the medium of all elements: horns, eyes, face/figure, position.

We believe that these are not simply convergence elements, but the express wish of underlining the presence of the divinity, of the uranian bull.



Fig. 58. Rituals of pouring the sacred liquid on the bucranium-altars (a-c); d, bucranium and column.

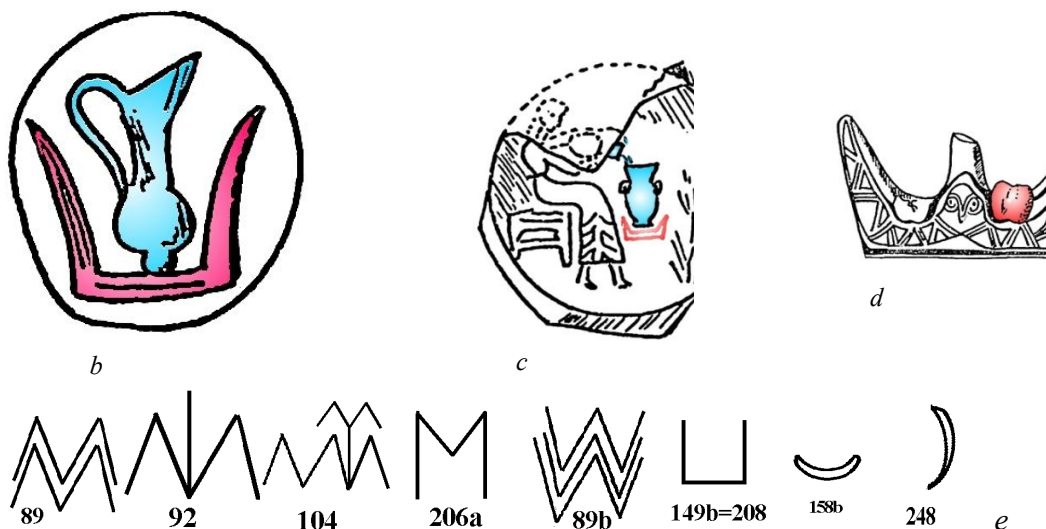


Fig. 58e. Symbols and signs from the Danube Script.

¹²⁰ Diamant, Rutter 1969, 153, Fig. 7: the Early Bronze Age from there is corresponding to our Copper Age.

Rituals with bucrania. We wish to underline here the existence of the rituals connected to the bucranium and the signs that are defining it. We are referring to a series of images from Crete, where we are aware about the high cultic level played by the cult of the bull, a royal symbol, just like it was throughout the kingdoms of Sumer, where the shepherd Dumuzi, the acolyte of the goddess Innana¹²¹ or the legendary hero Gilgamesh, had been fighting with the Celestial Bull¹²².

Here we are also referring to the images on the seals (Fig. 58), where appears the bucranium (our marking in red), associated with the *tree/tree of life* and the pouring of the *sacred liquid* (Fig. 58 our marking in blue). In one case with a bucranium from whose middle part a column is rising, on the left shoulder appears another bucranium (Fig. 58d, red). We have seen above, at the column/the sacred tree, the relation with the bucranium, but the images from below are adding to those ones.

¹²¹ Krammer 1962, 220 ff.

¹²² Krammer 1962, 13-137, Fig. 30.

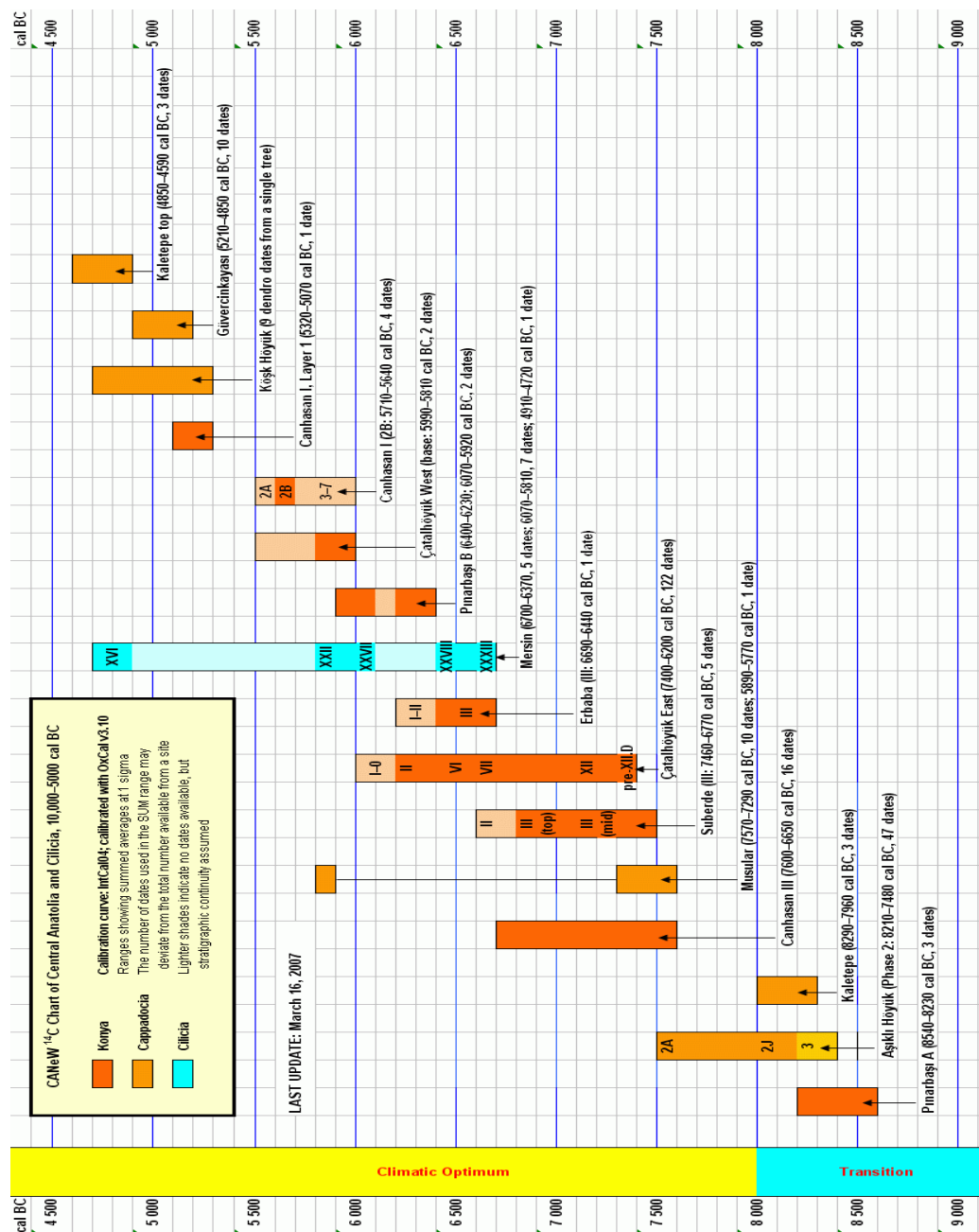


Fig. 59. The CANEV Project (Reingruber, Thissen 2005).

Maybe randomly, during the Neolithic, in the Tisa culture, on an idol with throne appears in his left hand bucranium (see below the bucrania and the throne). We do know that the left side, the side of the heart is connected with the woman (affection, love, sin): that bucranium is also suggesting the fecundity, fertility.

The same ideas are suggested by the presence of some symbols/signs related to the moon, from the *Danube Script* - **DS** / *the Danubian Symbolism* - **SD** (Fig. 58b)¹²³. In order not to make this text too complicated, with too many references and notes about the C14 data for each group of objects, we have illustrated only the most recent C14 data (Fig. 59)¹²⁴. For the other settlements that have no C14 data, there exist the comparative stratigraphy data presented by Mülle-Karpe in 1968¹²⁵.

The horn of plenty, the devotion horns

The horn represents the symbol of the divinities like: Ceres, Fluviile/Rivers, Abundance, Steadfast, Fortuna/Fortune¹²⁶. These are implying: force, invulnerability, lightning, power of belief and the shield of God for the Hebrew and the Christians¹²⁷; a royal sign for the Sumerians¹²⁸; for the Celts, an invincible divinity (except for the soles)¹²⁹. But there are also some nuances to these, the bull horn being a feminine symbol, too¹³⁰.

The horn of plenty, according to the traditions (myths, legends), is related to Zeus, who, while playing, broke the horn of the goat Amalthea which was breastfeeding him; therefore, he promised her to have all the fruit she might desire. According to some other legend, it might be the horn of the big river *Acheloos*, which is metamorphosing in different forms, including into a bull one.

Actually, in the Greek-Roman mythology or legends, the horn is symbolizing the free/costless abundance/wealth of the divine gifts which are coming from the Water or from the Sky. Later on, they received the name of *rhyton*, being the vessels used for pouring or drinking in the form of a

¹²³ After various debates during the ethno-religious symposia, is impossible to draw a line between the two notions, **symbol** and **sign**, because they are combining themselves on objects, cult objects, on the small tablets and some other artifacts, according to the necessities, needs and the desired message that must be transmitted. A singular sign on a vessel is becoming a symbol. More signs express an idea, a word, a notion, an expression, a direction etc. However, all these are depending on the context.

¹²⁴ Reingruber, Thissen 2005, Project CANeV; Symposium CANeV, Hauptmann et alii WEB; Duru WEB CANeV; Özdoğan 2003.

¹²⁵ Mülle-Karpe 1968, the tables 1-2 with the codes from the catalogue.

¹²⁶ Chevalier, Gheerbrand 1995 s.v. corn

¹²⁷ Chevalier, Gheerbrand 1995 368, psalms 18.3-4.

¹²⁸ Chevalier, Gheerbrand 1995 horn, *apud* Menghin Elit: Innana and Dumuzi appear on the throne with horns.

¹²⁹ Chevalier, Gheerbrand 1969/1973, 368, *apud* Ogac 10.

¹³⁰ Chevalier, Gheerbrand 1995, horn, *apud* Menghin.

horn. In the Old Europe civilization, the bull, the bucranium, the horn are symbols for the divinity of death and regeneration/rebirth¹³¹.

The horn had been used as a blowing instrument, being depicted in the Ida la Phaestos Cave (blowing on the horn).¹³² From the Paleolithic, the horn of plenty is being associated with the Great Mother. She has all the attributes of the feminine fertility. In her right hand she has the horn, and with her left hand she is protecting her womb-gravidity¹³³.



Fig. 60a. Lausel, the woman with the horn in her right hand apud WEB //ancientart...



Fig. 60b. Rhythoni, Căscioarele: the feet sustain the recipient with the sacred liquid also on a table or on a table-altar.

The theme of the relation between the woman and the bull depicted at Lausell is encountered in the sanctuaries from the Upper Neolithic, in Parța, where the partner of the Great Mother is the bull, seen as a divinity, too¹³⁴ (Fig. 6.a), in the Late Neolithic on the altar from Trușești (Fig. 31a), where the bull appears as a divinity next to the Great Mother. The horn is an emblem, a distinction sign for the royalty from the protohistoric era, in Sumer and others from the same time, but even later, for the Celts etc.¹³⁵.

The devotion horns represent an element with a cultic role, in others' opinion having also a functional role, as "cloves hearth." Of course, these must be tall enough to overcome the height of the fireplace and to have a minimum height for the food put on the skewers to fry. But in both cases

¹³¹ Gimbutas 1999, 142.

¹³² Picard 1948, 60-61.

¹³³ <http://ancientart.tumblr.com/post/68606474519/woman-holding-a-bison-horn-from-laussell-france>; Chirica V. et alii 2015, Fig. 25.

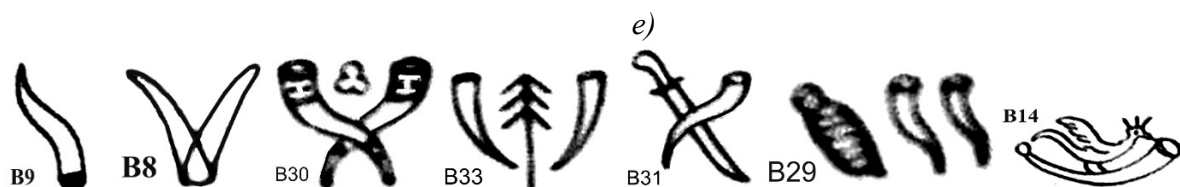
¹³⁴ Lazarovici Gh. et alii 2001, 271, 276, 278, 279, 282, 292.

¹³⁵ Golan 2003, 119, 125, Fig. 120.1-2; 125.

they are connected with the fireplace, fire, light, some of the attributes of the celestial bull. Even more interesting is the imitation of the clay horn, how they are the ones from Poduri (Precucuteni III, Fig. 61a)¹³⁶, Trușești-Țuguieța (Cucuteni A₃, Fig. 61b)¹³⁷, Kodjadjermen (Fig. 61c)¹³⁸ and from Gumelnița (Fig. 61d).



Fig. 61. The horn of plenty: a, Poduri – Dealu Ghindaru; b, Trușești –Țuguieța (a-b, apud Cucuteni 1997); c, Kodjadjermen; d, The Museum from Oltenița (c-d, photo Lazarovici Gh.); ▼ codes for symbols and signs (see below also the rupestral art).



Their form vary, some have holes in order to be hanged, and in this situation their position depends on the place the strings are put (Fig. 61). When the string is put in both holes and it is hanging, full of liquid/ sacred liquid or just empty, its position is similar to those with handle (Fig. 61c-d). Sometimes, these are defined as *rhython*, even though the ones from Donja Branjevina and

¹³⁶ Precucuteni III, ***Cucuteni 1997, cat. 128, pl. 10b.

¹³⁷ *** Cucuteni 1997, Cucuteni A₃, cat. 129; *** Neolithische Kunst 2008, cat. 126.

¹³⁸ Bőkőnyi, in *** Macht, Herrschaft 1988, 137, 209, Abb. 80, kat. 19.

from the Dalmatian Coast have some other form and are standing on feet¹³⁹, both being cult vessels and used for libations; of course, in our case, these were addressed to the divinity of the bull. The horn is associated with some other different symbols (Fig. 61e: trefoil/clover, the tree of life etc.). We notice that these are frequent during the Copper Age.



Fig. 62. a, The horn of plenty: different horn vessels, with the role of pouring liquids (askos), after Voinea 2005; b,

Devotion horns, Lepenski Vir – Sanctuary XLIV (processing after Babović 2006, 109, 203, Fig. 401).

Devotion horns

The devotion horns represent an issue often debated in the archeological literature¹⁴⁰.

In Lepenski Vir, on one of the sculptures is depicted, by incision, a face in the form of a bucranium (Fig. 62b)¹⁴¹, even if the majority of the sculptures are connected with the symbols for the fish, but there exist also some abstract ones that depict the Great Mother. Naturally, here appears also her partner, the Bull, which dominates the rupestrian French-Cantabric art, as we already know. The curve is depicting the eyes, the nose being between the eyes, the form is of a bucranium.

The amulet from Tărtăria was mistaken for an “anchor” or the name used for it had been improperly used¹⁴². In this case, the hole which was indicating that the piece was worn around the neck was not taken into consideration. The dimensions of the string were the same with the ones from the tablets worn sometimes by the *Lady of Tărtăria*. Therefore, this was a piece used for distinction. Its form resembled some bull horns. Marco Merlini has analyzed this issue and offered various analogies for the devotion horns¹⁴³.

¹³⁹ They appear since the Early Neolithic at Donja Branjevina, Karmanski 2005, pl. LXVI-LXVII.

¹⁴⁰ Torciă 2012.

¹⁴¹ Lepenski Vir – Sanctuary XLIV, Babović 2006, 109, pl. color, 203, Fig. 401.

¹⁴² For this issue see: Makkay 1968; Lazarovici Gh. 1979, pl. XXII/C5-8, D2-3, E9.

¹⁴³ Merlini 2011, 150, Fig. VIIB.27-30, see the analogies and the comments.

The devotion horns may appear as incisions on vessels (see below at the vessels), but there exists also a series of pieces, like a pintadera, on which are being depicted various horns, some being marked with dots, most probably representing a familiar totem, the number of dots indicating the degree of kinship.



a



Fig. VIIB.27. A fragment of a pendant in form of horns of consecration of a ram.



Fig. VIIB.28. The "anchor" found at Tărtăria has the perforation running parallel and not orthogonally to the arms. Therefore, it is a very unproductive suspended object for the weaving process, but could have been worn as a charm.

b



c

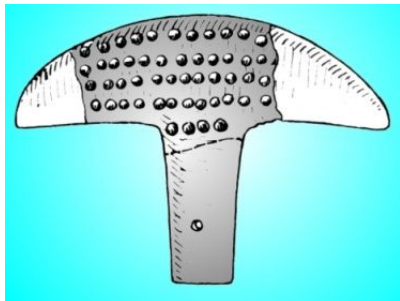


Fig. VIIB.29. Gumelnița A2 "Thessalian figurine" from Măgura Gumelnița (Romania) (photo: courtesy of F.M.U.S.E.U.M. project).

d



e



f

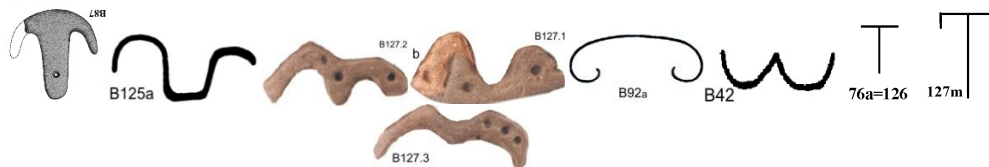


g



h

Fig. 62. Devotion horns, pendant, Tărtăria: a, our reconstruction ; b, apud Merlini; c, Zorlențu Mare – Codru (photo Lazarovici Gh.); d, Gumelnița – Măgura, the Gumelnița culture, after Merlini 2011; e, Gălâbnik, pintadera with bucrania; f, Turdaș; g, Late Neolithic¹⁴⁴; h. Uivar; codes DS ▼.



¹⁴⁴ Korkuti 2003, 284, tab. IV.8.

From Zorlențu Mare, the level of Vinča B2-C, originates a piece having a support and ending itself in some devotion horns (Fig. 62c), the support allowing it to stand on a cult small table, as part of a domestic altar. So we have here two categories of horns, worn as pendants or placed on small tables or in some sacred places from the dwelling.

We noticed in Parța that each block/group of dwellings had a certain familiar totem¹⁴⁵. An extensive study about the bucrania from the Gumelnița culture was made by Ion Torcică, starting from two sites belonging to the Gumelnița culture: Vitănești-Măgurice and Surdulești¹⁴⁶. The author presented numerous analogies for his discoveries, from which we have used some situations in our study (Fig. 9a, 43c, below Fig. 63a-b). Some of these had holes, they could be hanged (Fig. 63a.4; 63b.6-7, 10), but they were thinner than the ones in Tărtăria. Their extremities were ending as in the different cases of the bull horns. It is possible for some of these pieces to have also practical functionalities.

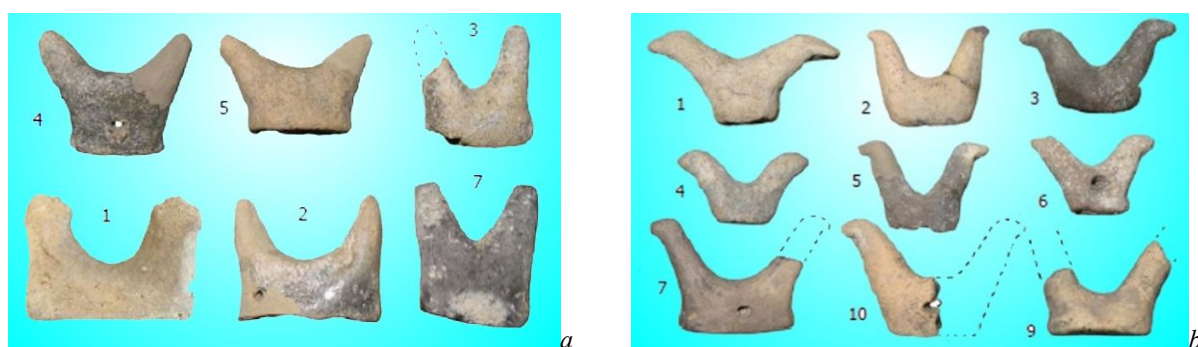


Fig. 63. Bucrania from the Gumelnița culture: a, apud Torcică 2012, 65, pl. I, selective; b, apud Torcică 2012, 65, pl. II, selective; codes from the DS.



A typology is not hard to make, harder being to understand the significations their form is presenting, as it is the above case for the sign 106d, its position being also significant.

¹⁴⁵ *The House of the Stag, The House of the Bucranium, The House of the Altar and others*: Lazarovici Gh. et alii 2001, 146-148, Fig. 110-111; excavations 2005-2006, <http://www.prehistory.it/sitoromeno/parta/parta2006/parta>.

¹⁴⁶ Torcică 2012.

The discoveries from Varna are showing in the best manner the importance played by the devotion horns¹⁴⁷. Highly probable, we have here the case of some applications from a royal or priestly/sacerdotal robe. Actually, the entire imagery of these pieces has a royal character (*Herrschaft*). It is not necessary to insist here whether it is a case of royal graves, cenotaph, cultic deposits or others, but the inventory is really obeying the meaning of the term *Herrschaft* = *domni*¹⁴⁸.

Both positions of the horns (Fig. 64, see also the codes) allow to be seen from above, from the earth, but also from the sky (the celestial bull as a divinity), like in some other situations¹⁴⁹.

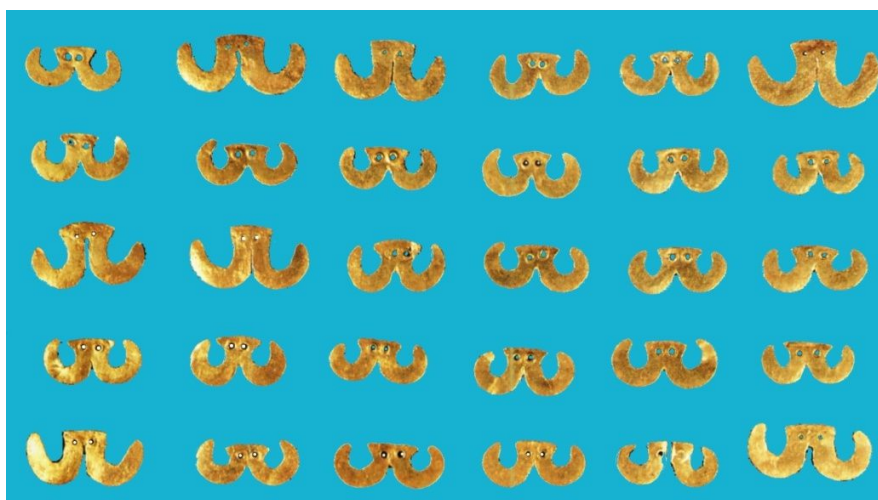


Fig. 64. Applications in the form of a bucranium from Varna; codes DS▼.



Starting from the Late Neolithic, but especially during the Copper Age, the throne is quite frequently encountered, mostly for the divinities or their priestesses, which means also that in the big communities existed a *civil or religious elite*. It formed itself during the Upper Neolithic, alongside with the construction/emergence of the big fortification systems, implying situations that needed such organizational system.

Retrospectively, the most interesting devotion horns, made from small plaques of gold, come from the famous discoveries in Varna¹⁵⁰. Besides the models of the bulls discovered in tombs and

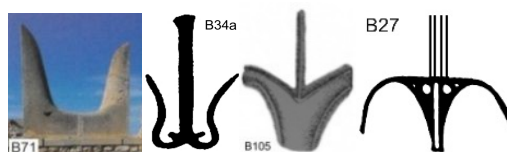
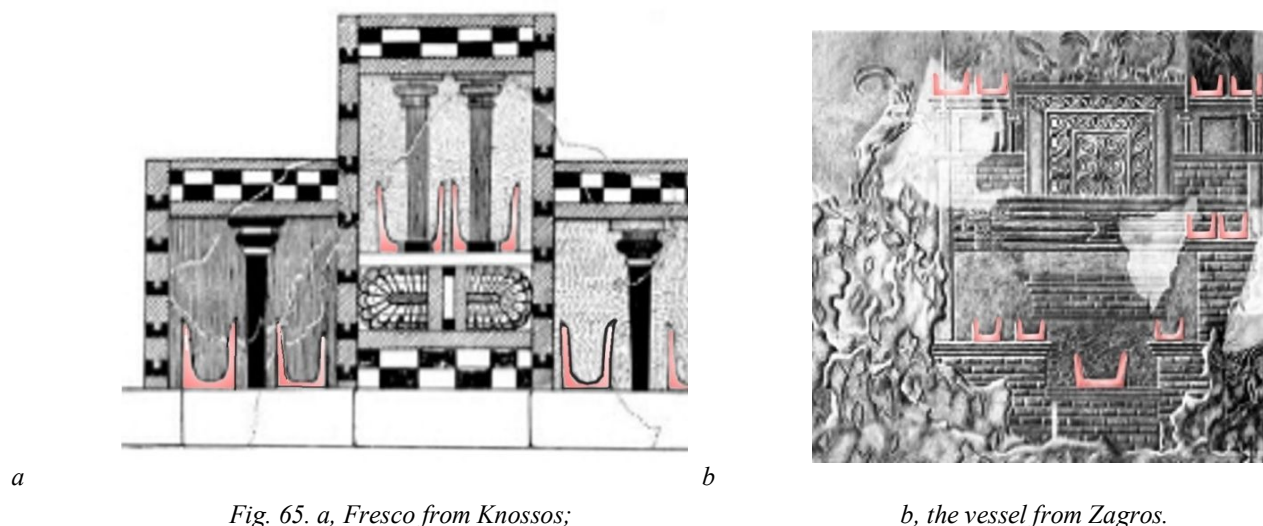
¹⁴⁷ Ivanov 1988, Abb. 34.

¹⁴⁸ *** *Macht, Herrschaft* 1988.

treasures (Fig. 64b), there exists a series of fineries, also from gold, in the form of a bucranium. These had been fixed by the two holes that might suggest the eyes. The forms are alike, but the dimensions vary a little. Taken after their form, they seem to be ram horns, a dominant element in the Late Neolithic, in the area of the Vinča culture (see above Fig. 51, 53.3).

The importance of the bucranium as a symbol of power might be noticed by the palaces from the Minoan civilization and, later on, in the Mycenaean one (Fig. 65), where the bucranium appears on vessels or frescos, associated with the column or the double axe, both symbols of power. The symbols relate themselves to the theme of the bucranium – column.

These scenes allow us to turn back in time, in the prehistoric eras, as arguments for the existence of the monumental bucrania, from the sanctuaries and then as pieces on the domestic altars.



¹⁴⁹ We have stipulated these in our analysis about the candle-vessel from Zorlențu Mare: Lazarovici Gh., Lazarovici C.-M. 2014, 216, Fig. 52a-c.

¹⁵⁰ Torică 2012, 68, pl. IV.3, Varna.

The idols with horns, the mask with horns

Idols having mask with horns and coiffure/hairdo

The earliest idol belonging to the bucranium type, unperforated, comes from Trestiana I, the Starčevo-Criș culture¹⁵¹. The Vinča culture, by its idols and altars had developed the cult of the bucranium, especially of the ram. In the Vinča culture, especially at the level of Vinča C (Fig. 66), appear numerous altars with ram heads, which are taken by the Vădastra culture¹⁵², but also by others civilizations in that area.

About this type of pieces we have written repeatedly¹⁵³. The head, in fact the mask, has the form of the two horns (Fig. 66-67)¹⁵⁴, but sometimes the head-mask has horns or the hair in the form of horns (Fig. 67e-f).

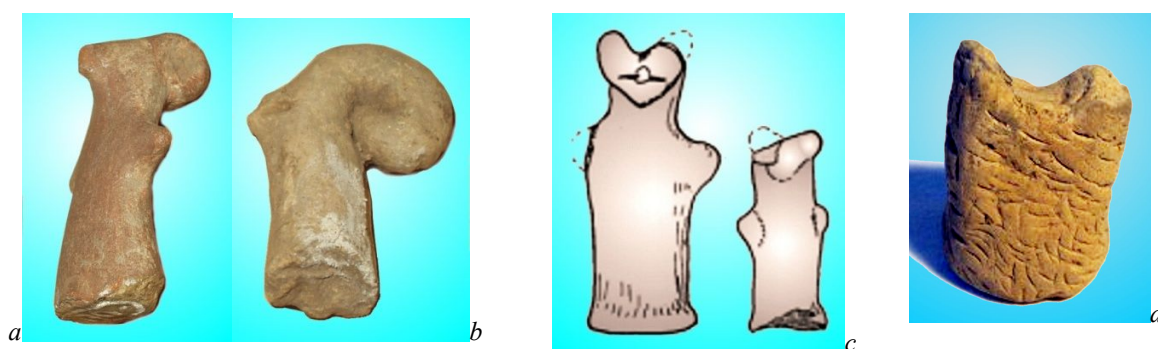


Fig. 66. Head with horns or coiffure/hairdo like horns: a-c, the Vinča culture: a, Kosovska Mitrovica; b, Pavlovac; c, Zorlențu Mare; d, Trestiana, Starčevo-Criș (photo Lazarovici Gh.).

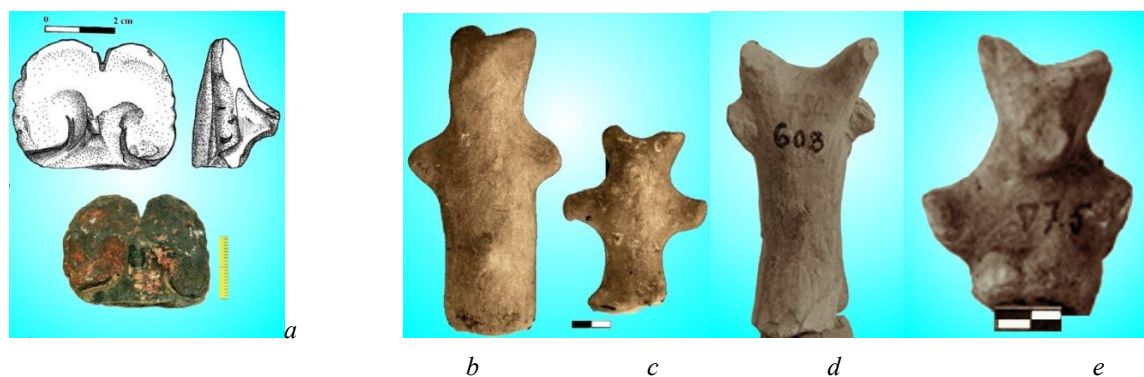


Fig. 67. Idols having mask with horns: a, Hotărani, the Vădastra culture (apud Nichita 2012); b, Pavlovac – Čukar; c-e, Vinča-Bjelo Brdo¹⁵⁵, photo and processing Gh. Lazarovici.

¹⁵¹ Popușoi 2005, 245, Fig. 48.1.

¹⁵² Nichita 2012, cat. 20a.

¹⁵³ Lazarovici Gh. 1979, 89, Fig. 710, type f.; 2014.

¹⁵⁴ Lazarovici Gh., Lazarovici C.-M. 2014, Fig. 23; regarding the Mask, typology, 198-199.

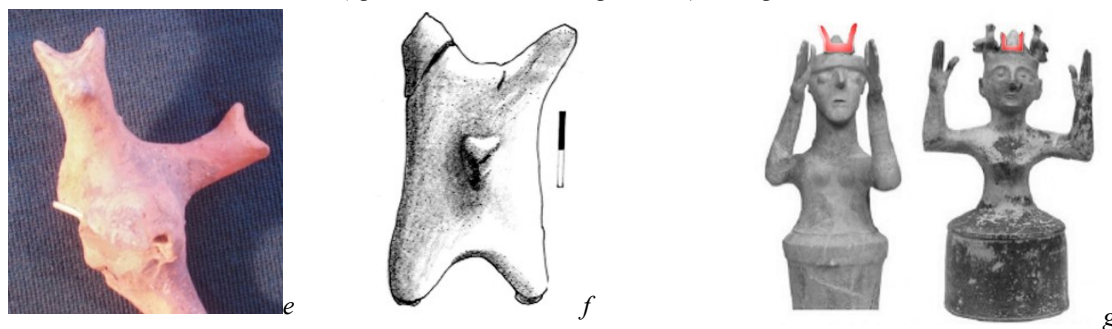
¹⁵⁵ Lazarovici Gh., Lazarovici C.-M. 2014, Fig. 23.3-4; apud Nenad Tasić, documentation of Vasić.

Most of the idols with horns are males, their phallus is marked or they do not have breasts, being them either anthropomorphic (Fig. 66d-e, 67), or perforated (of the Zorlenț type, in our opinion¹⁵⁶) (Fig. 68c). One special piece comes from Kosovska Mitrovica - Fafos I (Fig. 66a), having on its both arms a bracelet. In the Vinča culture (fig. 68 c-e) there exist some with a similar mask like the ones in Zorlențu Mare (Fig. 66c).

Actually, in this same period, the ram is more frequently encountered on the cult small altars than the bull, most probable due to some economic reasons, a cooling or drying of the weather, the moving of flocks becoming necessary. The ram horns are frequently met, during the Late Neolithic, on altars, idols, in the Danube region, but also on the Adriatic coasts, in the Hvar culture (from Hrvatska, this meaning Croatia, see below at protomes). In some other cases, the crown of the idols has on its front side the bucranium (Fig. 68.5, the bucranium colored by us).



Fig. 68. Perforated idols with bucrania: a, Liubcova¹⁵⁷; b, Turdaș¹⁵⁸; c, Gomolava¹⁵⁹; d, Turdaș (processing Lazarovici Gh.)¹⁶⁰; e, Zorlențu Mare; f, Drăgășani Cerboaica¹⁶¹; g, Karphi orant having crown with a bucranium (apud Torcică 2012, 69, pl VI.3-4); c, e, photo Lazarovici Gh.



¹⁵⁶ Lazarovici Gh. 1979, 95; 2014.

¹⁵⁷ Lazarovici Gh., Lazarovici C.-M. 2014, 193, 194, Fig. 10, apud Luca 1990.

¹⁵⁸ **Type Va:** Lazarovici Gh. 1979, 95; 2014, Fig. 42b.

¹⁵⁹ Brukner 1966, 154, Fig. XIV/1, there are some other pieces from the category of the perforated idols: Jovanović Š. 1977, Fig. 16/20.

¹⁶⁰ Vlassa 1966 and bibl.; Hansen 2007.2, Taf. 283.2_4.

¹⁶¹ Nichita 2012, apud Nica, Schuster, Zurzuliu 1995, Fig. 11.1

We also notice in the case of the perforated ones that many of them are masculine, too (Fig. 68),¹⁶² even if some of the later ones (Fig. 70), also male ones, are not perforated. An idol of the bucranium type, double (in the form of a „H”) has, as a protoma, one bucranium (Fig. 68.4). In Liubcova (Fig. 68a) the idol, together with some other pieces were belonging to the inventory or the domestic altar of some priestess¹⁶³. We must underline some decorative elements, related to the bucranium and the column, at the idol from Sahr’a r Hagolan (Fig. 69b), even though in this case it is not about the *double axe*¹⁶⁴ or the *tree of life*, as it appears in most of the situations (Fig. 58).

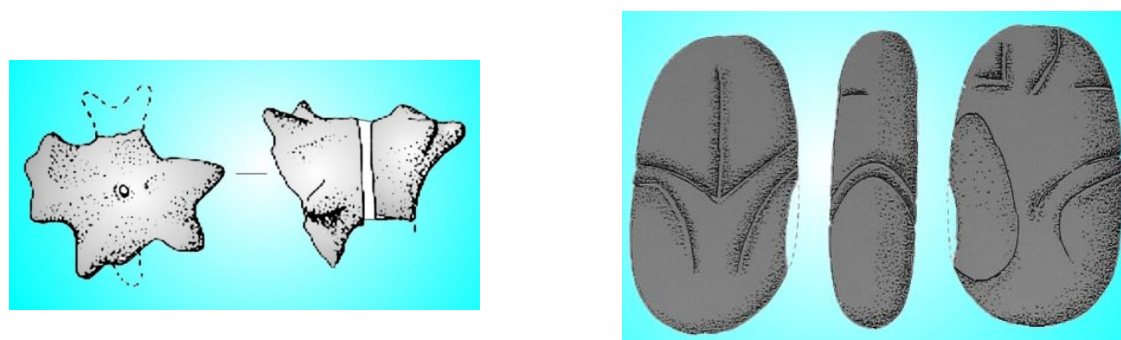


Fig. 69. a, amulet, Bicske – Galagonyá; b, idol with a bucranium on the back, Sahr’ar B105 Hagolan¹⁶⁵.

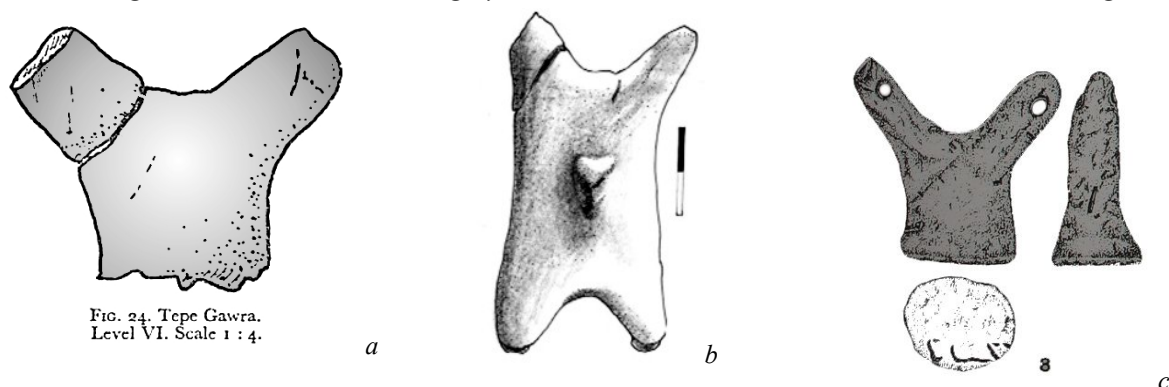


FIG. 24. Tepe Gawra.
Level VI. Scale 1 : 4.

Fig. 70. Bucrania: a, Tepe
Gawra¹⁶⁶;

b, Drăgănești Olt
(Gumelnița – Sălcuța¹⁶⁷);

c, Mezökövesd (LBK)¹⁶⁸.

Much more special/uncommon and rarely encountered are some pieces having the head of the bucranium associated on the amulets of the Bicske type (Fig. 69a), a similar situation in Zorlențu

¹⁶² It is about the types IIIB1 and V, see also their analogies: Lazarovici Gh. 1979, 95, Fig. 8.

¹⁶³ Luca 1990; 1998 etc.

¹⁶⁴ Picard 1948, 48, 64, 67 etc.; Renfrew 1987, 287, Fig. 7/1, pl. 49, 50b, h, 51.a-d, 52.g, I, j, k, 53.a-g, 54.a-g; Gimbutas 1984, 75, 78, Fig. 30 etc.

¹⁶⁵ For Bicske, Makkay 1978; code B105 decoration in the form of a bucranium, on the back: Hansen 2007.2, Taf. 30.1.

¹⁶⁶ *** *Anatolian Studies* 1969, 168, Fig. 24, Tepe Gawra level VI.

¹⁶⁷ Drăgănești Olt Cerboica, Nichita 2012; Nica et alii 1995, Fig. 11.1a.

Mare (Fig. 68.3), even if there is a large distance between the two settlements, more than 350 km, but similar pieces do appear. Here, it must be the case of a migration from the Vinčian area, but this proves that behind the forms there are some myths, legends, people know each other, have relations, maintain traditions, due to the fact that, after the migration process, there should have developed some other forms. Of course, there exist some local interpretations, as in the case of the specialists from Bicske – *Galagönyas* (Fig. 71b-c)¹⁶⁹. On the bottom of a vessel in Turdaş appears the woman dancer, but she is joining/twinning the bucranium (human/man 96, human/man 97) with the phallus or the bucranium with the column (human/man 98). Decomposed, the image of the symbol (71d) comprises a real cryptogram from the numerous variants of the codes: dance (man 2m, man 11), phallus (man 0m 97, man 98), bucranium with column (man 98, B106).

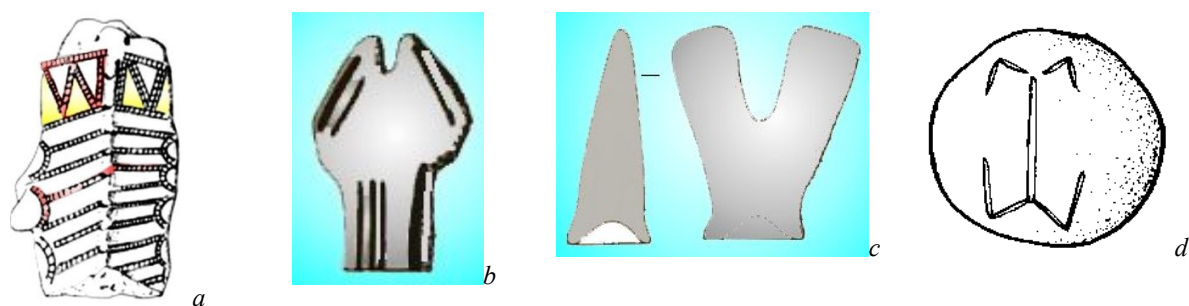
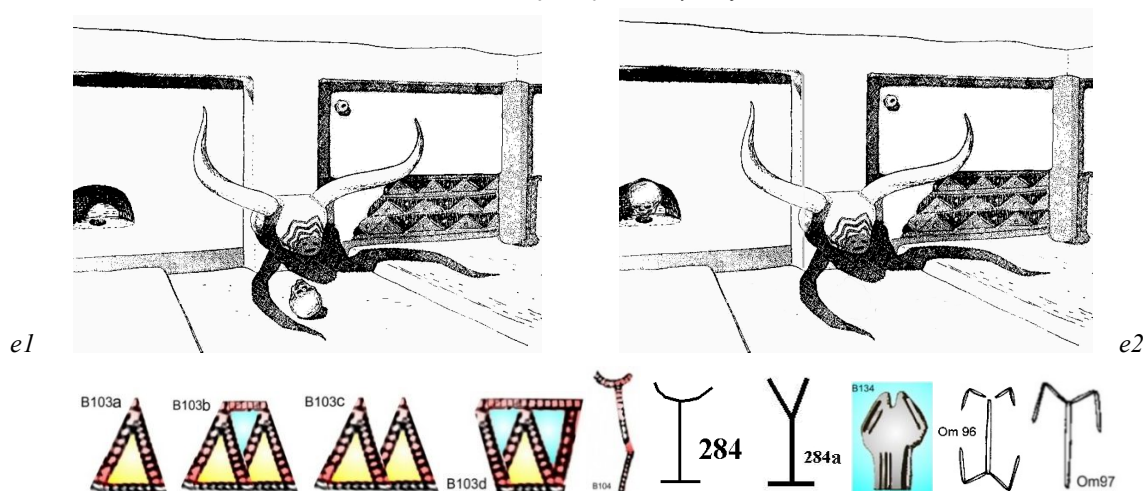


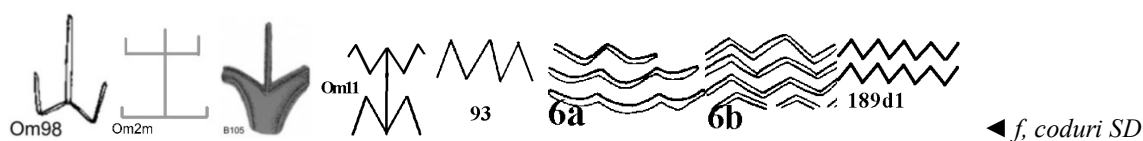
Fig. 71. Bucrania and representations of bucrania: a, Bajič¹⁷⁰, after Hansen 2007.2, taf. 527.1, 527b; b-c, xxx; d, Turdaş; e, Çatal Höyük; f, codes DS.



¹⁶⁸ Hansen 2007.2, Taf. 229.8; at the level Aflöld – Sztatmar.

¹⁶⁹ Makkay 1996, 127, Fig. 77, see also some other pieces of the perforated type and the horn of an animal.

¹⁷⁰ Hansen 2007.2, Taf. 527.1, 527b.

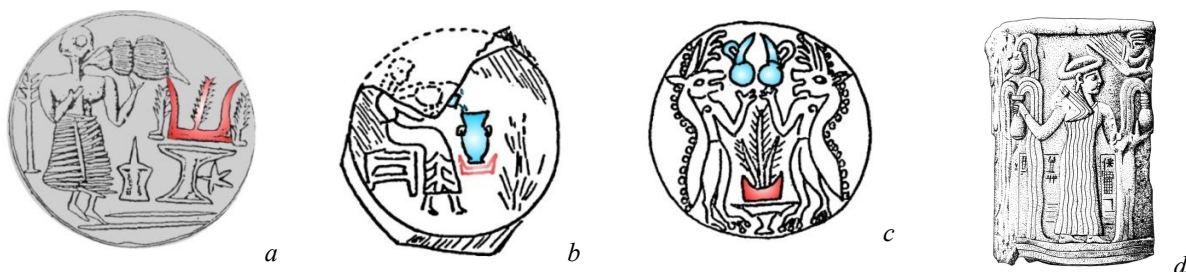


At Çatal Höyük, in one of the temples (Fig. 71e¹⁷¹, see also our variant with the skull placed in the niche, e2) the decoration on the muzzle is made from successions of M and W, zigzags, alternative triangles (Fig. 71e).

Even though our intention is not to analyze here and now all the significations, in Fig. 71d we tried to look closely at some cryptograms and to interpret them according to the signs from the *Danube Script*: we find here again the symbols of the bull related to the fecundity, meaning the codes DS 183a, 183c, 193c, 183d, B134, and even in Fig. 71c, where the piece from the sideways/profile resembles a phallus and the one sat in plan resembles a bucraniu-vulva. We have seen above the association of the Bull with the Great Mother as a partner, acolyte, as elements placed at the origins of life.

Bucranium and the sacred liquid

On the Cretan seals, the bucranium often appears on the altar, and some characters are bringing libations, pouring (Fig. 56b) or drinking (Fig. 72a) from the sacred liquid, these being associated with the tree of life. Here it is about the protohistoric eras, from whose time and later on are known a series of legends related to these issues. The theme is obviously connected with the living Water, encountered in the fairytales of our mythology or from the older mythology, how is the case of a stela in Lagaş, where the divinity has horns and from whose hands, with two libation-vessels, are springing Tigris and Euphrates (Fig. 72d).



¹⁷¹ Mellaart 1964, 67, Fig. 21, the wall, NV, sanctuary VII, 21 restauration.

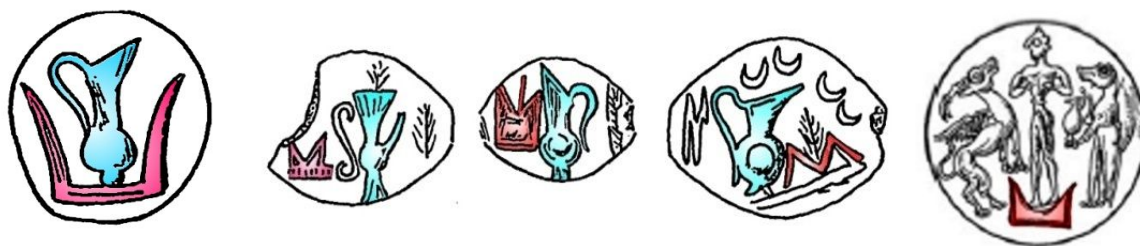


Fig. 72. a-c, Images from the Cretan seals¹⁷²; d, divinity from Lagaş, with horns and libation-vessels in hands¹⁷³.

On those seals, next to the priestess who is gathering the sacred liquid (Fig. 72a) or is pouring (Fig. 72b), appear also some characters having a human body and stag horns, which are receiving the sacred liquid (Fig. 72c) in vessels for libations (*rhyton*, Fig. 72a-b, *amphora*, Fig. 72b or *askos*, Fig. 72c, *cup* and others from the sanctuaries¹⁷⁴). In all these cases, the bucranium is associated with the tree of life and the sacred liquid (the living water, milk, wine, oil, sperm etc.)¹⁷⁵. In the images from the Neolithic mythology, the priestess is keeping in her hand vessels of the *askos* type, as in Liubcova¹⁷⁶ (see also above the themes connected with the light, the horn of plenty etc.).

Mask and horns

Some aspects have been analyzed above, at the idols (Fig. 66-67 etc.). A special piece due to its monumentality, situated in the vicinity of a strong burnt wall of a construction, is the mask from Uivar¹⁷⁷.

¹⁷² Golan 2003, 130, Fig. 122.3.

¹⁷³ Kovács I. 2014; 2015 etc.

¹⁷⁴ Kovács I. 2014; 2015 and bibl.

¹⁷⁵ În general: Sandars 1985, 246-247, Fig. 159; *Kachti*, Rutkovski 1972, 199; Lazarovici Gh. et alii 2001, I.1, 279-280, 289, Fig. 263; Lazarovici C.-M. 2004, Fig. 42; *Kamilari*, Rutkovski 1972, 213; Karageorghis 1977, 43; Lazarovici Gh. et alii 2001, I.1, 272, 278, 280, 285, 289-281, 290-291, 299, 306, 313-314, 331.

¹⁷⁶ *Liubcova*, Luca, Dragomir 1985; 1987, Fig. 31/42, 4/1; Luca 2002, 15-28, Fig. 1, photo 1-2; Lazarovici Gh. et alii 2001, 281, Fig. 258.

¹⁷⁷ Schier 2005; Schier, Draşovean 2005; Draşovean 2005.

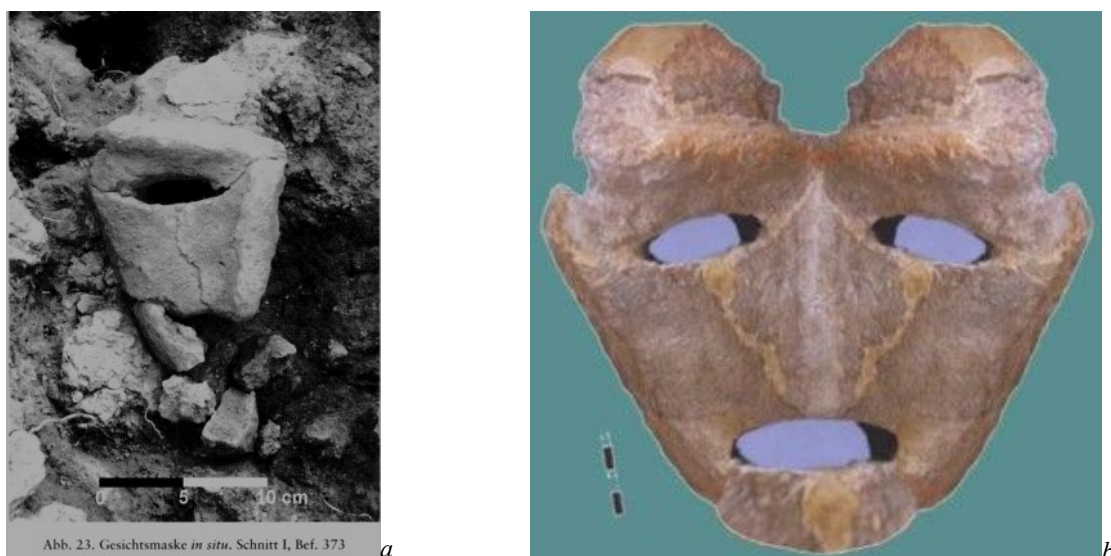


Fig. 73. Uivar, the Vinča C culture: a, monumental mask; b, reconstruction Lazarovici Gh.¹⁷⁸.

The mask was half broken. After our symmetrical reconstruction, it appears like a mask with horns, probable bull ones. This mask is unique in the South-East of Europe, as its discoverers had rightly appreciated. After publishing the materials from the complexes, one can decide whether it is the case of a domestic or a community sanctuary. In fact, like in many other cases, the breaking is an act performed by the ones from that community or by the enemies, for the destruction of the sacred effigies¹⁷⁹.

Fineries and pendants with bucrania

Most likely there exist many pieces like these, but we know just few cases. Some are pendants that can be attached to clothing (Fig. 74a), some have a mask form (Fig. 74b).

The most interesting piece comes from Bilcze Złote – *The Werteba Cave*, in Ukraine, a cave with a cultic role, practically a sanctuary (Fig. 74a-b)¹⁸⁰. This piece is an application made from bone, having the form of a bucranium, most likely used to fix the clothing of some priestess¹⁸¹, on it being incised a feminine silhouette in an orant position, on the forehead of the bull.

On a zoomorphic mask from Căscioarele (Fig. 74c), which represents a bucranium, on its forehead and pate is depicted a woman.

¹⁷⁸ Schier, Draşovean 2005.

¹⁷⁹ Paul 1992, 103; Monah 1997, 202-203; Lazarovici Gh. et alii 2011, 125, 135, 285; Merlini 2011, 106, 109, 125, 36, 147 etc.; Lazarovici C.-M., Lazarovici Gh. 2006, 96, 203; 2015, *the snake*, Fig. 50-51; 2009, Fig. 4; Lazarovici Gh., Lazarovici C.-M. 2009; etc.

¹⁸⁰ Gimbutas 1989, 247, Fig. 7.39; Burdo 2010, 21; Monah 2012, Fig. 188.11; etc.

Later on, we encounter two myths from the Prehellenistic religions: one in which Zeus is kidnapping Europe, disguising himself under the form of a white bull, and takes her to Crete – being here the depiction of the Celestial Bull as a God/Zeus; and another one, in which Zeus is asking Hephaestus, the divine blacksmith¹⁸², to hit him in the head with the hatchet, in order to be born the goddess Athena, the goddess of love, wisdom, war etc.

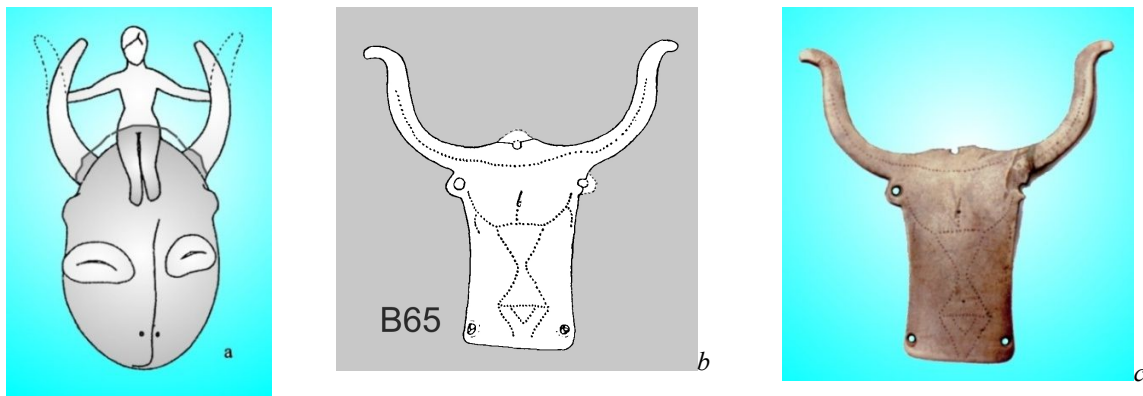


Fig. 74. a, The mask from Căscioarele; b-c, Bilcze Złote, the Werteba Cave (processing Lazarovici Gh.).

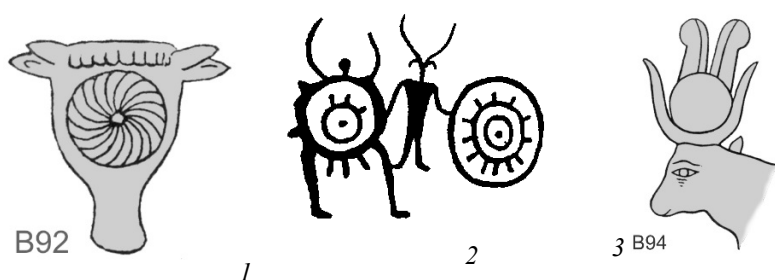
Of course, there exist many variants, numerous elements of some archaic myths that during the Hellenistic civilization are reaching superior artistic forms. The symbols like the one from Căscioarele are to be found at the bottom of the myth about Zeus and Europe or the birth of the goddess Athena. Analyzing the image, it seems like we actually see the goddess “springing”/getting out from the head of the god-bull, Athena being placed between the horns with the same force that is attributed to the bull /a god in order to face/confront the earthly world/dimension.

Bucranium, stele, constellations

The bucranium is associated with various symbols or signs, placed on its forehead or between the horns.

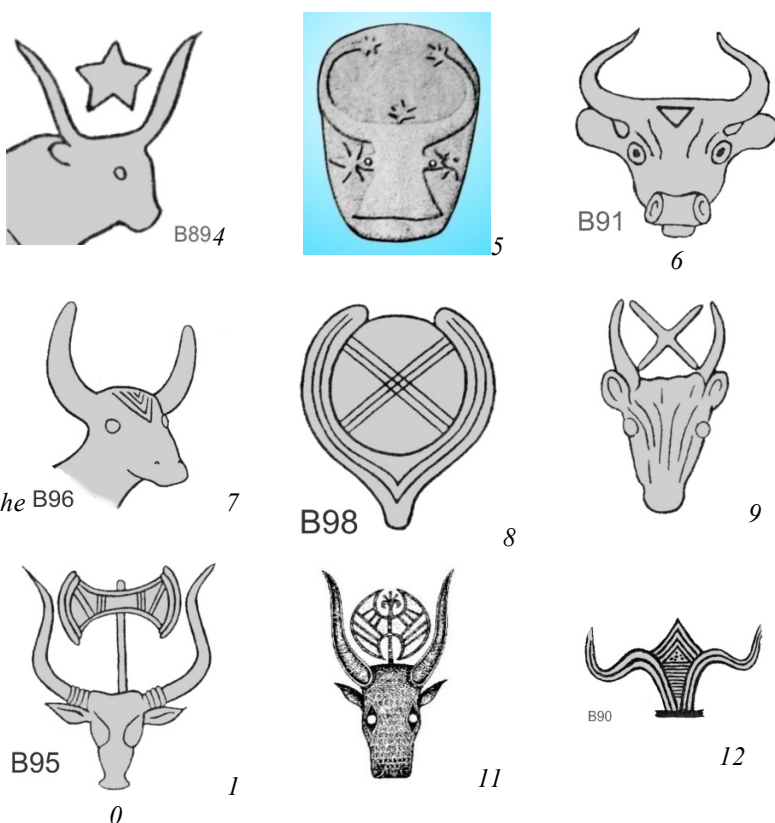
¹⁸¹ The Werteba Cave is a nature sanctuary.

¹⁸² Eliade 1981, 55-56; Luigi Luca Cavalli-Sforza, Colin Renfrew, Marija Gimbutas and Martin Bernal on the Indo-European invasions and the earlier Goddess cultures - Peter Myers, November 23, 2001; update February 11, 2004; users.cyberone.com.au/myers/gimbutas.html;



sometimes remain unknown.

There exist also some decorations with symbolic significations, like the meanders, the “V” sign, which have their meanings for each civilization and which



Some symbols (for the codes of the symbols we have a data base, including information; their provenience is presented in the **annex of codes**¹⁸³) this including the supplementary attributes of the bucranium.

For example, the Sun (Fig. 75.1-3, 7) is indicating the light, warmth, day, man/male, fertility; the Moon (Fig. 75.2), the stars (Fig. 75.4-5) are suggesting the night, cold light, the woman, fecundity. The sun is depicted under various forms by: a diaphragm that is concentrated

in the center of the forehead like an energetic point (Fig. 75.1 discovery from the South-East of Europe¹⁸⁴; the birth and protection of the sun, Fig. 75.2, apud Golan 2003); the triangle as a masculine sexual symbol or a feminine one, according to its position (Fig. 75.6-7, 12); X (Fig.

¹⁸³ For the signs and symbols see the codes of Lazarovici from the Database of Writing (with references to Lazarovici Gh. 2003; 2004; 2009a; 2009b), where are more than 2700 recordings; but also Merlini 2009 and bibl. with the older bibliography; the same for Haarmann 1995; 2008a; 2008b; 2009a; 2009b, etc. and Winn 1973; 1981; 2004a; 2004b.

¹⁸⁴ Golan 2003, 132, Fig.124.7d .

55.10-11) or the cross of St. Andrew, symbol of the celestial human body (the union of the right side with the left one); the double axe, symbol of royalty, of force, of power (Fig. 52.10-11).

Boat with horns

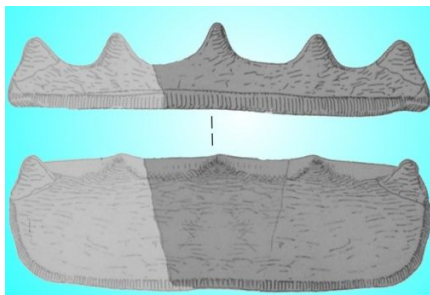


Fig. 76. Târpești, bench with horns having four sitting places.

sanctuary, on it being situated the councilors/advisers, the wise men, the hoard of the old women / elders (the “divan” at Silvia Marinescu-Bîlcu¹⁸⁵). In this case, there are suggested four places, which could also represent the divinities of the seasons or the of the Cardinal points and others.



Fig. 77. Lid with horns, Vinča –BB, processing Lazarovici Gh.

Their association has the role of enlarging their authority/power, just like in the case of the throne.

Vessel-lids with bucrania

In the Vinča culture we do find numerous vessel-lids, but very few have “horns”, and most of them are not depicting the image of the bull, except some situations (Fig. 77, Vinča B1, 7 m¹⁸⁶). From Turdaș, there are two vessel-lids and both of them

depict a bull head with horns¹⁸⁷. Both images are very expressive.

¹⁸⁵ Marinescu-Bîlcu 1981, Fig. 113.15; divan/diwan = this word has also the meaning of “place for advice”.

¹⁸⁶ Vinča-Bjelo Brdo, -7 m cliche 713, apud Nenad Tasić.

¹⁸⁷ Roska 1941, pl. 102.

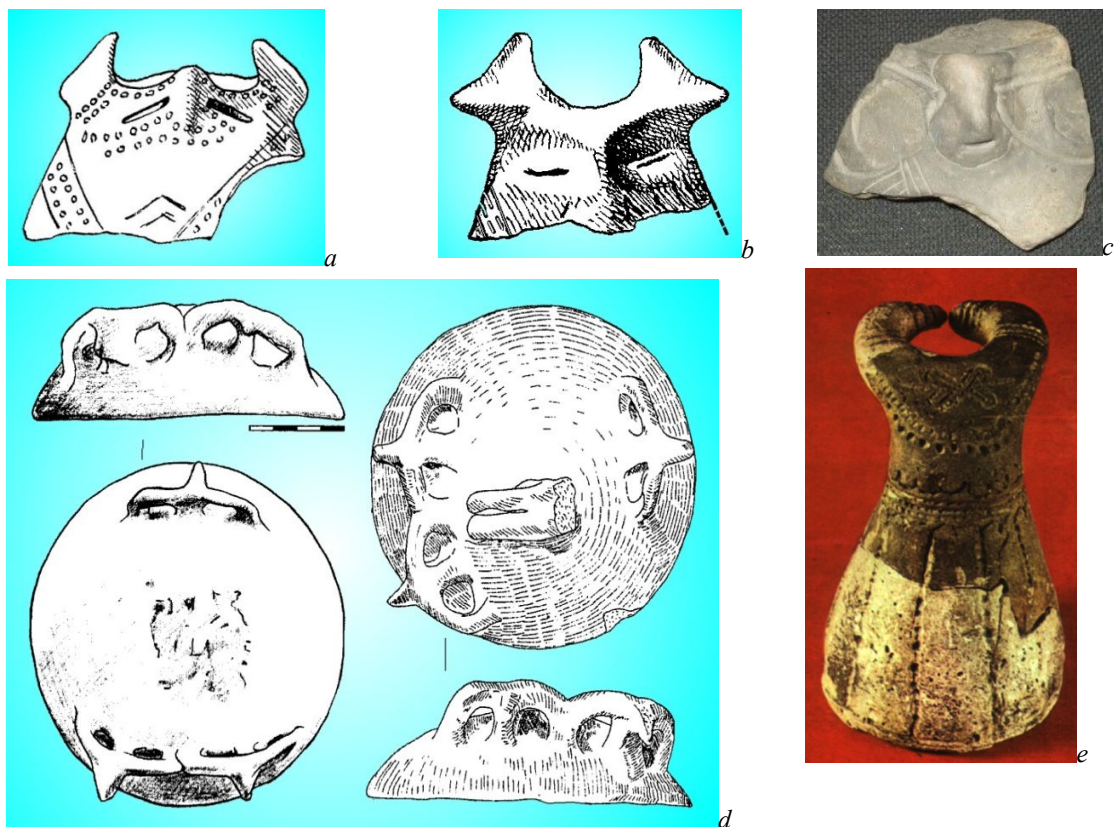


Fig. 78. Bucrania and vessel-lids with bull or ram horns; a-c, Tudaș; d, Căscioarele, the Gumelnița culture, phase A2 (apud Andreescu 2002); e, The Bronze Age; f-g, The Copper Age (processing Lazarovici Gh.).



Starting from the Vinča C, then during the Copper Age, like the cases from Căscioarele¹⁸⁸, the place of the bull is taken by the ram, on small altars or vessel-lids, even though their form differs from the Vinčian ones.

Another type of lids, in comparison with the above ones (Fig. 77-78), used for covering the amphoras, are the flat ones, which are sustained by the edge of the vessels (Fig. 79).

¹⁸⁸ Andreescu 2002, pl. 371.2.

Some lids belonging to the Gumelnița culture have their button inside the curve, others have it outside (Fig. 79)¹⁸⁹. In all the situations above, the role of the bucranium was to protect the contents of those vessels, being it a liquid (Fig. 77-78a-b), or some other products (the case from Fig. 79a, with two orifices, which allowed the lid to sit perfectly on the vessel, both pieces being hanged: in this case, we believe the recipient was being used for the storing some seeds), or vessels for cooking, in order to accelerate the boiling or to protect its contents from the ashes or from some other remains during the boiling. The button in the form of a bucranium allows a slow removing of the lid – if we think about their usage during the cooking process.



Fig. 79. Lids: a, Turdaș (photo Lazarovici Gh.); b, Gomolava, Vinča C; c-d, Gumelnița; d, apud Nichita 2012.

Usually we forget about the functionality of the objects, analyzing mostly their type, which has to do with a cultural history, while the analysis of their functionality has to do with the analysis

¹⁸⁹ Fig. 79d, from The Museum of Drobeta-Turnu Severin, part of The Istrati Collection.

of the process involved¹⁹⁰. The deep lids of the amphoras imply a long-lasting fixation, while the flat ones imply a short-term one.

Deposits of bucrania, trophies, horns, houses/dwellings, graves

Deposits of skulls, bucrania, big animal trophies (bull, bison, *bos primigenius*, stag), in graves, in ritual pits, in the neighborhood of the houses or in their foundation, have the role, mostly, of not allowing the carnivores to reach that pieces. The skull, the bucranium, as we have seen above, in most cases had a protective role. In all these cases, it is about the cult of the skull¹⁹¹.

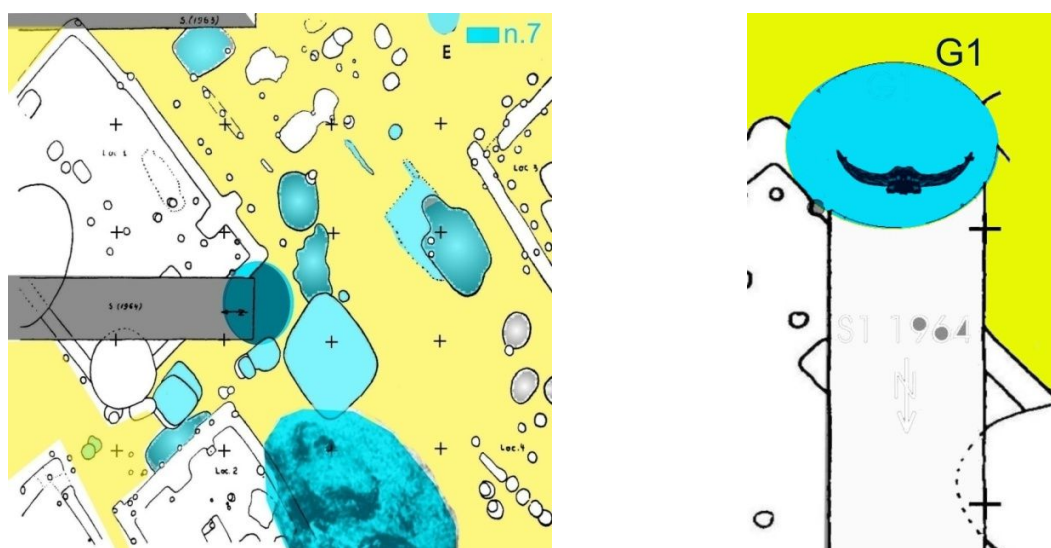


Fig. 80. Zorlențu Mare, level 7, Vinča A3/B1-B1, bison trophy (more than 1.15 m), foundation pit.

Trophies. The keeping of the trophies is an act of pride, of power and force, of acknowledgement of the hunter's qualities while fighting the animal. There are numerous situations when these trophies are deposited in the foundation of the pillar from the center of the dwelling (see Fig. 81b) or in the center of the settlement (Fig. 80), as in Zorlențu Mare, in the oldest living horizon, level 7, having the role to protect that settlement and the sanctuary from its vicinity, founded in the level of Vinča B¹⁹².

¹⁹⁰ For a comparison of the type and its functionality, see our study based on the ideas of Tugby (1967, 1971): Lazarovici Gh. 1993.

¹⁹¹ Lazarovici C.-M., Lazarovici Gh. 2006, 56.

¹⁹² The preservation state was precarious, the remains could not be lifted. The distance between the peak/extremities of the horns was more than 1.15 m. Digging coordinated by Marius Moga and Octavian Răuț; Gh. Lazarovici cleaned the trophy with the spatula.

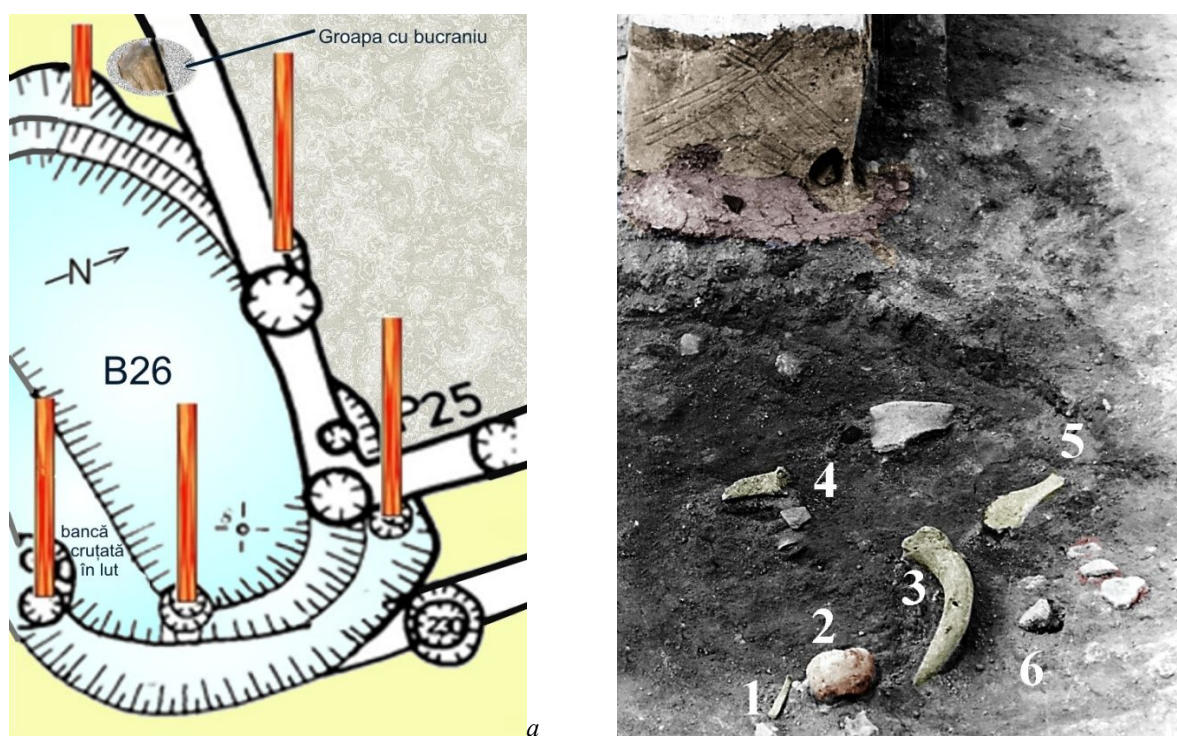


Fig. 81. Deposits of bucrania, Parța, the Banat culture phase II: a, dwelling 26, level 7a; b, Sanctuary 2, level 6, under the floor/fireplace of the monumental altar; c, The House of Stag, level 6, at the central pillar; d, ritual pit, level 5, the Banat culture phase III.



At Parța, in the first level of living (Parța 7a), in the margins of a dwelling, but in the interior, was deposited in a small pit with ashes, a bucranium of a bull, but without horns¹⁹³. In comparison with other complexes, this dwelling has three reconstruction stages and various levels for living, marked by fireplaces and burnings. For these reasons we believe that the person living in that dwelling, situated in the central area of that settlement, played a special role (socially and religiously) inside the community. The ashes deposited next to the bucranium indicate, very likely,

¹⁹³ Lazarovici Gh. et alii 2001, I.2, 86, Fig. 59-60.

the remains of a banquet/feast related to the killing of the bull/devotion act or a foundation-sacrifice¹⁹⁴.

Also in Parța, in the levels 6 we have two situations when the horns or the foreheads of the bull were placed like in the following examples: one at the bottom of the fireplace around the pedestal of the monumental statue from the Sanctuary 2 (Fig. 81b¹⁹⁵); another one at the bottom of a central pillar from *The House of the Stag* (Fig. 81.c)¹⁹⁶. As one may notice in all the above situations, the deposits of bucrania, being either offerings or trophies, are connected with the cultic complexes. Also a cultic situation, also from Parța, we have from phase III of the Banat culture: in the pit 121 (Fig. 81d¹⁹⁷) were deposited, as offerings, a bull horn, a stag one, bone fragments, many vessels, some of them being graphically remade, others being just parts of the vessels; they all had been deposited with their bottom upwards or with their interior downward. If we are thinking about an often met ritual, when it takes place the breaking, smashing or turning upwards of some vessels, but downward when it comes to the grinders (most of the times related to the sacred numerology of 6+1, 3+4 or 7¹⁹⁸), it becomes clear the sacred character of the pit.

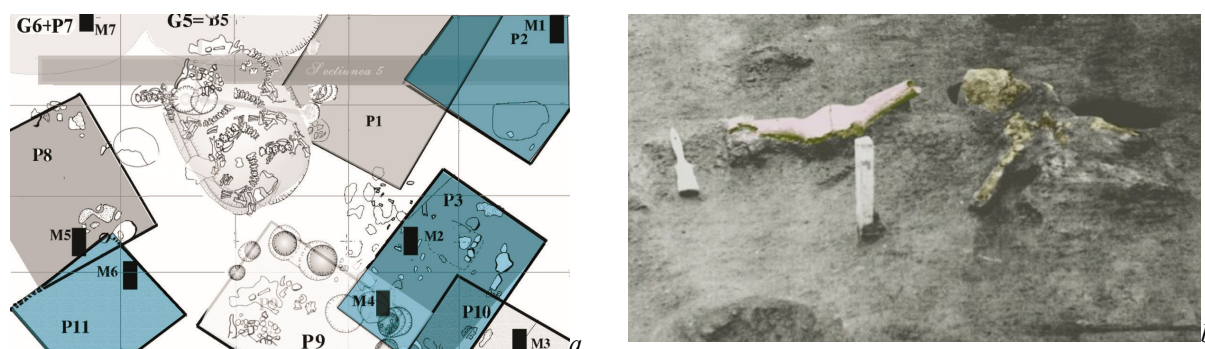


Fig. 82. Zau de Câmpie, Dwelling 8.

In Zau de Câmpie – *Grădiniță*, in the floor of a house (L8, Fig. 82b) was deposited one bull trophy (Fig. 82b). This was placed under the floor of the house, the floor being made of yellow soil mixed with black one, and settled. After that, in the same floor, a small girl had been buried,

¹⁹⁴ Dumitrescu Vl. 1970, 7, 22; Monah 1997, 34, n. 46.

¹⁹⁵ Lazarovici Gh. et alii 2001, 228-229.

¹⁹⁶ http://www.prehistory.it/ftp/parta_archaeological_excavations02.htm

¹⁹⁷ Lazarovici Gh. et alii 2001, I.1, 86, Fig. 59-60.

¹⁹⁸ Vlăsa 1970, 169-174; Luca, Pinter 2001, 88-89 154, Fig. 6; Lazarovici Gh., Petrescu 2000; 2002; 2003; Lazarovici C.-M., Lazarovici Gh. 2006, 168-174, Fig. IIIa.54-58; Lazarovici Gh. 2009b, Fig. 12b.

wearing beads around her neck. In all the dwellings above the ground, from the area analyzed by us, have been found children graves, of different ages, from 1 to 4-5 years old (Fig. 82a).

The depositing of the bull skulls in the floor of the dwellings is a procedure known from the PPN, at Hallan Çemi Buiding A¹⁹⁹, in the Early Neolithic, at Cârcea²⁰⁰ and then, later, in the Upper Neolithic, at Gălățui –*Movila Berzei 1* (construction that is considered to be a sanctuary²⁰¹), in the Copper Age, in the Foeni- Petrești cultures,



Fig. 83. The Trypillia Culture; Luka Vrubleveckaja, apud *** *Enticlopedia Tripolskoi* 2004, Vol. 1-2, s.v. Bibikov, Luka Vrubleveckaja.

in Lumea Nouă²⁰², Petrești, at Ocna Sibiului - *Fața Vacii*²⁰³, in Tiszapolgár at Tureni²⁰⁴, in the Cucuteni – Trypillia culture, at Luka Vrubleveckaja (Fig. 83)²⁰⁵ and others²⁰⁶. In some situations, the deposits of bucrania are associated with other objects (like the grinders), into which there is deposited the entire trophy or just the

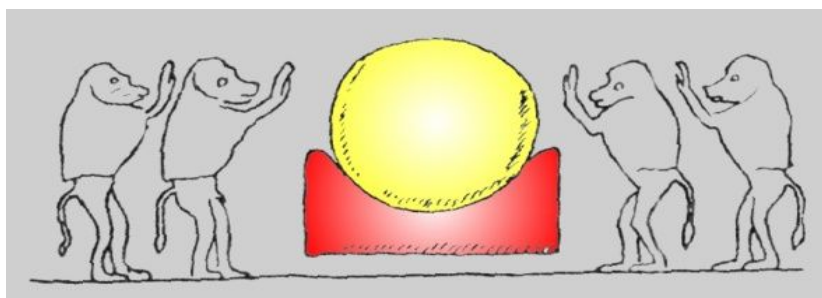


Fig. 84. Egypt, apud Golan 2003, colored by us.

horns, aspect related to the dominant theme of the bull, of the bucranium, horn, divine protection, fecundity and fertility, but also storms, thunder, as we have seen above for the horn.

¹⁹⁹ Rosenberg, Redding 2002, 46; Mateș 2010.

²⁰⁰ Nica 1976, 444.

²⁰¹ Neagu 1999, 22; 2000, 29-30; 2003, 92; Neagu, Parnic, Rădulescu 2001, 85-86.

²⁰² Gligor 2009.1, 204-206; 2009.2, pl. CCX.5.

²⁰³ Paul 1992, 115.

²⁰⁴ Lazarovici Gh. 2009b, 245-246.

²⁰⁵ Burdo 2010; ****Enticlopedia Tripolskoi* 2004.1, 2004.2, s.v. Bibikov, Luka Vrubleveckaja.

²⁰⁶ Tracey Justice 2010, 103.

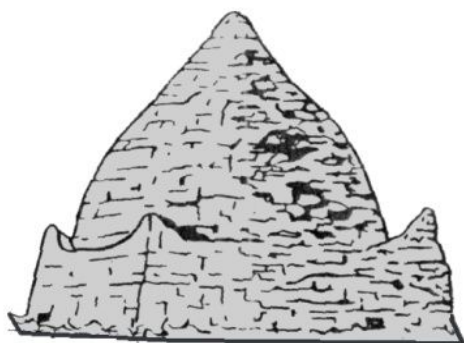


Fig. 85. Temple, Dagestan Richa, cent. 12, after Golan 2003, 130, Fig. 122.8.

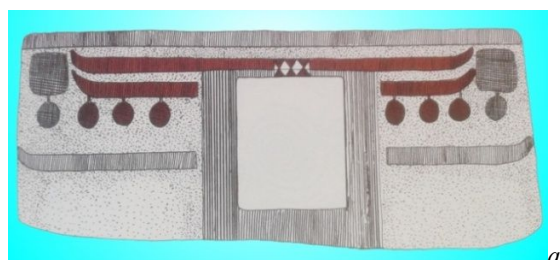
Bucranium and the invocation/invoking

In an image from Egypt, four monkeys are invoking the birth or sunrise of the sun having a bucranium (Fig. 84 our coloring)²⁰⁷.

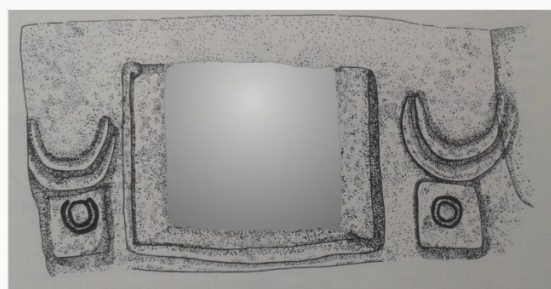
The relation Sun - bucranium is the relation Earth – fertility and fecundity, the bull symbols, a theme which, as we have presented above, is frequent in the Egyptian mythology, like above, in Fig. 75.

Graves and temples with bucrania

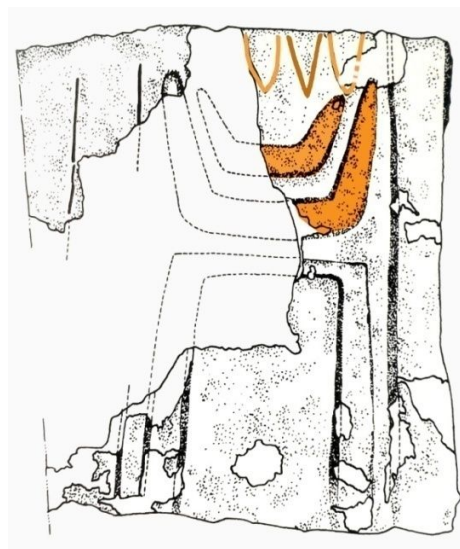
In the monumental art, protecting the “house of the dead” (even though the protecting of the dead is just partly our theme), of their souls by the bucranium, is suggested by the presence of the bucrania on columns, above some entrances of the temples or guarding the entrances sideways or above them (Fig. 85-86)²⁰⁸.



a



b



c

Fig. 86. Graves/Hypogee with symbols made of bucrania: a, apud Gimbutas 1989, 285, Fig. 447; b-c, Sardinia 4000 BC, apud Gimbutas 1989, Fig. 417.

Belonging to a late moment of the historic times, in Daghestan, a monumental grave still had at its corners the horns of a bucranium (Fig. 85).

²⁰⁷ Golan 2003, 130, fig. 122.2, Egypt.

²⁰⁸ Gimbutas 1999, 36-37, 63 and bibl.

In our times (around 1955-1960), in Milcoveni (Banat) village, the killing of the community bull was still a genuine celebration/feast, people from the entire village wearing their traditional costumes, therefore, their most precious clothing. On the forehead of the bull there were placed two tricolored strips, in a diagonal position (the cross of St. Andrew)²⁰⁹. The signification of the tricolored strips had also a practical role, due to the fact that above the crossing of the strips was the precise place/point where the ones that were killing the bull had to hit him with their sledge hammers, in order to make the bull dizzy.

Scepters in the form of a bucranium

According to its definition, the scepter is: rod, stick (decorated), stick for command, used by the commandants, sovereigns, as a symbol for authority. Figuratively, it symbolizes dignity, power, greatness, sovereign authority; reign, leadership. – From Fr. *sceptre*, Lat. *sceptrum*. (DEX online).

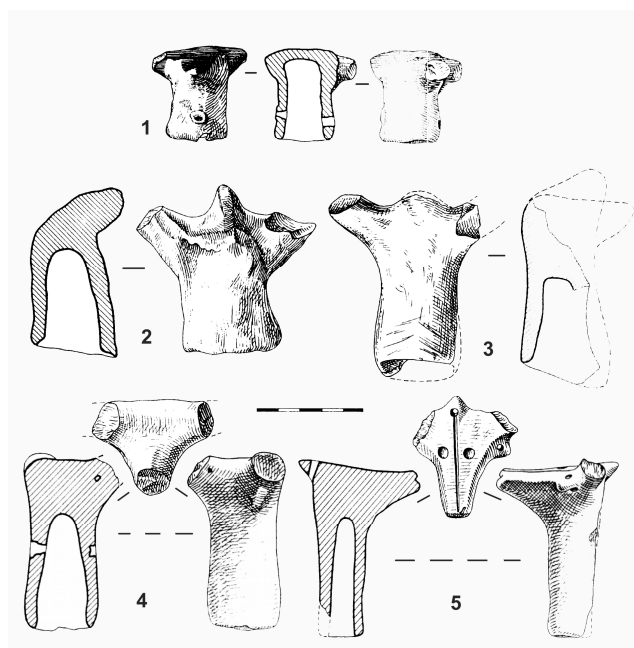


Fig. 87. Scepters, profiles: 1-4, Drăgușeni (apud Marinescu-Bîlcu, Bolomey 2000); 5, Parța.

As we may see, in a proper and also in a figurative manner, this is an effigy of power.

Taking after the profiles through the holes of the scepters (Fig. 87), we notice that some could have been fixed on a stick or a wooden rod (Fig. 87.1-4) or a bone one, to these the orifice being thinner (Fig. 87.5). From the Neolithic we have very few images or representations about the ways these scepters could have been used or how they really looked like. From Thore, a character wearing

horns has in his left hand a scepter (Fig. 88.1), and on his head two horns. The most interesting scepter models, belonging to some characters from the Late Neolithic – the Copper Age, that we have come from Crkvine Stubline (Fig. 88.3), belonging to Vinča C²¹⁰, where the groups of figurines, all masculine, with a mask resembling a bird appearance, have as scepters different

²⁰⁹ Remarks made by Gh. Lazarovici, from his native village.

models, mace ball, miniature axes, like the types of axes from the Copper Age. It may be possible that the idol from the inventory of the *Lady of Tărtăria* to have had the same insignia/mark, like a stone axe or some other object fixed on a tale, in the area of the shoulder (Fig. 88.2).

The oldest scepters, might be even from the Paleolithic, even though our information is not focused on that period. However, we have data referring to PPN, at Hallam Çemi (Fig. 89.1²¹¹) being some scepters with animal heads made from stone (Fig. 89.1; 30c²¹²).



Fig. 88. Scepters: a, Wirth 1931, B16; Thorre 44; b, Tărtăria (photo Merlini); c, Crkvine Stubline (apud Crnobraja 2011).



Fig. 89. 1, Hallam Çemi, PPNA; 2, Scepter with 6 bucrania made of copper, Nahal Mishmar, *** Die ältesten Monumente 2007, 4500- 3500 BC; 3, Parța, apud Drașovean 1996.

The scepters are made from stones, sometimes semiprecious, marble, bone, but the most numerous ones are made from clay. These need to have also a tale. Sometimes the scepters were

²¹⁰ Crnobraja 2011; Lazarovici Gh., Lazarovici C.-M. 2014, 203, Fig. 22a-c.

²¹¹ *** Die ältesten Monumente 2007, 280, kat. 44 PPN A, Hallam Çemi.

²¹² Özkaya, Coşkun 2009, Fig. 9.

fixed on a stick, like it seems to be the one in Gornea, we believe, due to the fact that it has some orifices for fixation²¹³.

There are numerous figures from marble, stone or clay which have been fixed on such scepters, even from the Upper Neolithic, the Vinča A for Gornea and Liubcova, later on, in Turdaș²¹⁴, during a period when, in our areas, the earliest male figurines also appear. From clay is made a scepter belonging to the Banat Culture, from Parța, published by Fl. Drașovean who has also analyzed the fixation variants, making different analogies starting from some similar models with the one in Nahal Mishmar (Fig. 89.2)²¹⁵, from the Copper Age.

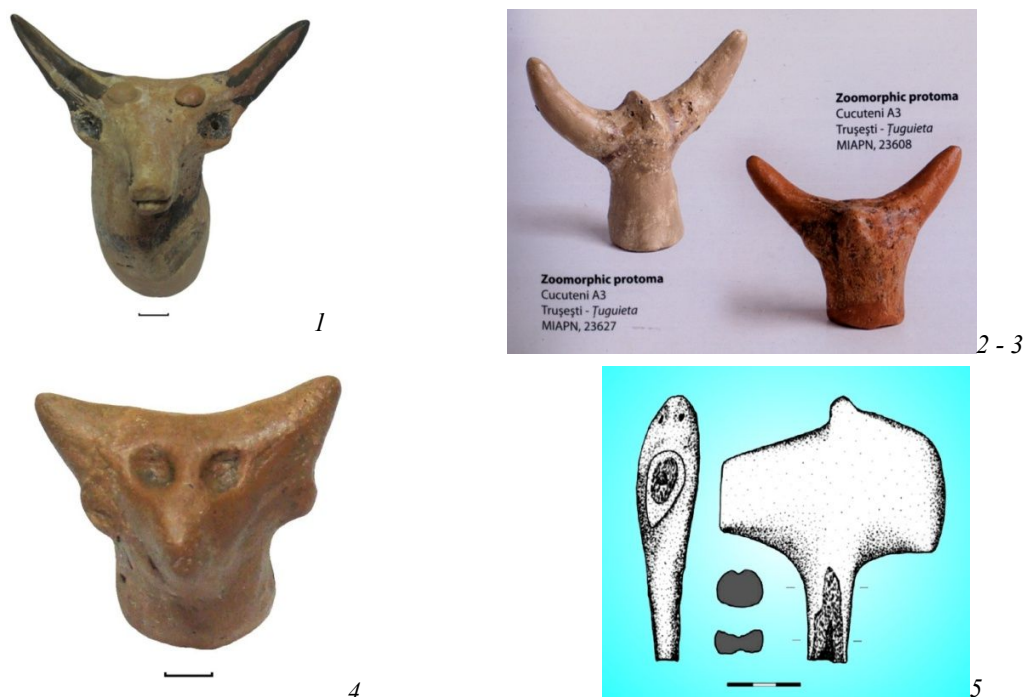


Fig. 90. Scepter made of clay, the Cucuteni culture: 1-4, Trușești – Țuguieța; 5, the Gumelnița culture, Ciolaneștii din Deal, stag horn, apud Frînculeasa, Mirea 2007.

²¹³ Lazarovici Gh., Lazarovici C.-M. 2014, 206, 209, Fig. 40a.

²¹⁴ Vlassa 1976, 100-106; Lazarovici Gh., Lazarovici C.-M. 2014, 206, 209.

²¹⁵ Drașovean 1996, 66.



Fig. 91. Bucra scepters: the Vinča culture: 1, Gornea; 2, Liubcova (photo Lazarovici Gh.); 3, Vinča-Bjelo Brdo (apud Nenad Tasić); 4, Ruginoasa, from the digging of H. Dumitrescu (photo Lazarovici Gh.).

(Fig. 90.1-4)²¹⁶ and Drăgușeni. For the scepters in Drăgușeni, Silvia Marinescu-Bîlcu had presented also some analogies from different periods, regarding the form and aspects encountered during the Copper Age²¹⁷. Next to cases we must mention also the scepter from Ruginoasa, from the digging of Hortensia Dumitrescu (Fig. 91.4), and another one from the settlement in Mănăstioara-Cetățuia (Cucuteni A₂-A₃; digging M. Florescu, V. Bobi); we believe that both of them are depicting some ovicaprine heads, even if the manner of depiction for the head differs.

The scepters are rare in the Gumelnița areal, among the ones identified until now being a schematic one from the horn of a stag, at Ciolănești din Deal (Fig. 90.5) and two more, one having a geometrical form, and the other having anthropomorphic characters, depicting the figure of a man²¹⁸. A. Frînculeasa does not exclude that some zoomorphic representations, with broken horns, today considered to be part of some vessels, in fact to have played the role of some scepters²¹⁹. The

Belonging to the same period, from the Cucuteni culture, there are most of the scepters made of clay, the majority having a central perforation which allowed their fixation on a tale, forming a rod or a scepter.

Some are of tremendous expressivity, with anatomic details (Fig. 90.1, 4) or just schematized (Fig. 90.2-3, 5), they all had the bull horns depicted, also its eyes and ears. The most numerous pieces of this type come from Trușești

²¹⁶ Dumitroaia et alii 2005, cat. 176, 178; Lazarovici C.-M. et alii 2009, chap. 1, Fig 13b, cat. 122-123.

²¹⁷ Marinescu-Bîlcu, Bolomey 2000, Fig. 172.

²¹⁸ Ilie 2012.

²¹⁹ Frînculeasa 2012, 64.

scepter made from stag horn, in Ciolăneștii din Deal, is much more stylized, being depicted the muzzle, and the horns only suggested.

Some harder-to-identify bucrania, which are representing wild horses, the onagru or others, also used as scepters, come from the Vinča culture, how is the one from Gornea (Fig. 91.1, Vinča A)²²⁰, Vinča – *Bjelo Brdo* (Fig. 91.3) or Liubcova (Fig. 91.2). The bull is symbolizing force, the onagru, the speed, suggesting also the male/masculine attributes, but often these are being associated with the Great Mother during the Neolithic and Copper Age.

Double axe and the bucranium

The double axe, *labrys*, is considered to be the symbol of the force while fighting.

Often the double axe appears alone on the column, symbolizing the connection between the earthly and the celestial force/power. In the Cretan – Minoan mythology, the double axe is associated with the bucranium (Fig. 92). *Labrys* has its tale stuck in a bucranium, this being in the form of an altar (Fig. 92.1, 5). In some of the Minoan scenes (Fig. 92.5), the altar formed by the bucranium and the double axe appears next to some fertility goddesses who are invoking the force, the divine power of the bull and of the double axe.

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²²⁰ Vlassa 1976, 100-106; Lazarovici Gh., Lazarovici C.-M. 2014, 206, 209, Fig. 40a.

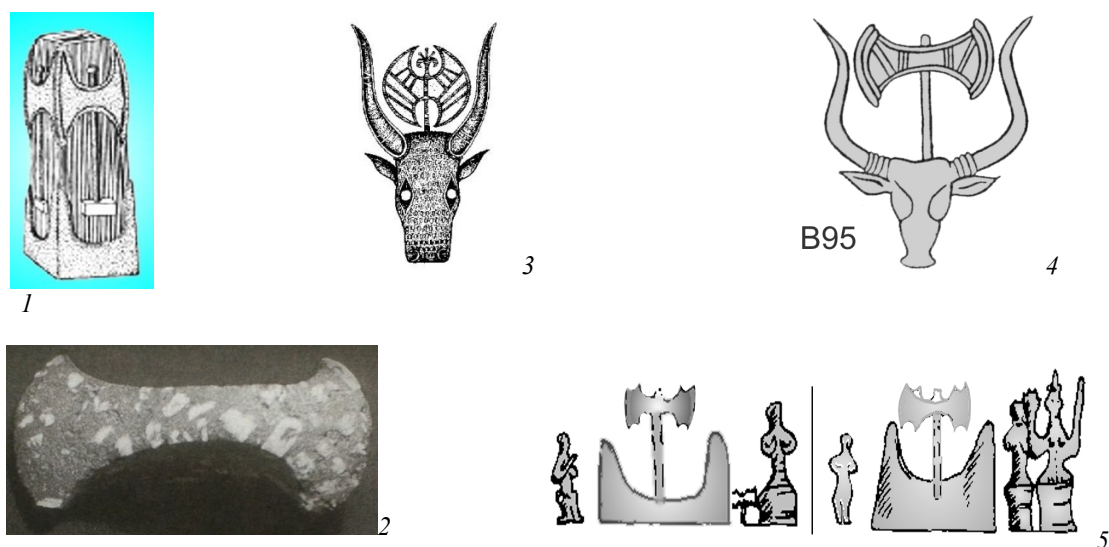


Fig. 92. Bucranium and the double axe: 2, piece from the Northern Balkans (apud Hayden²²¹); 1, 3-5, the Cretan-Minoan civilization (4 code from the DS).

Seals and the bucranium

On a seal from the Early Neolithic, in Gălâbnic appears a stylized bucranium. If we are analyzing the image we notice the association of a series of bucrania, starting from the below ones (1a-1b). The number of dots is suggesting a certain hierarchy which remains still unknown.

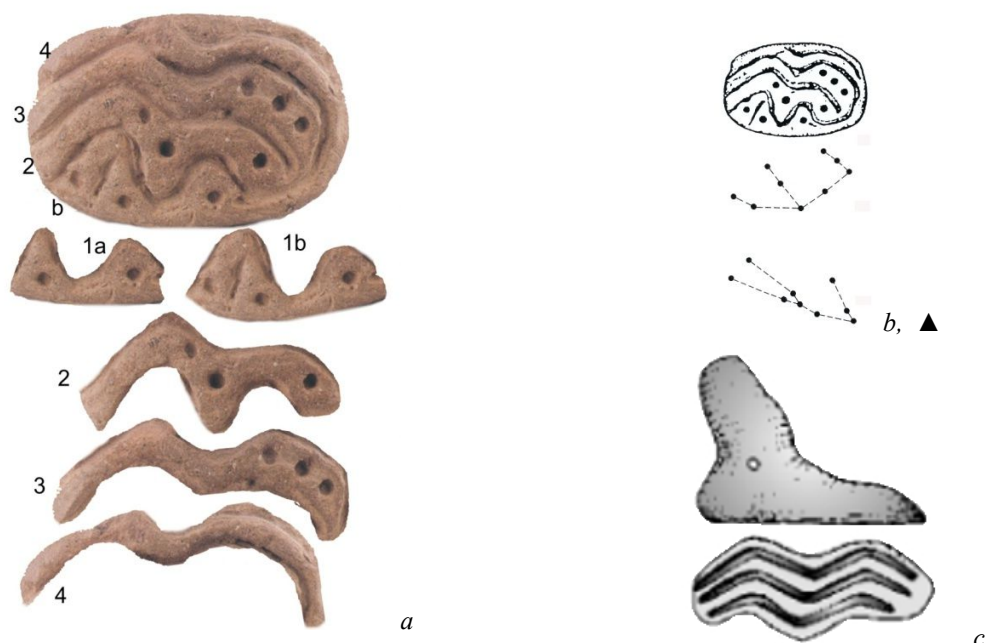


Fig. 93. Bucranium on seals: a-b, Gălâbnic, the Early Neolithic (Bulgaria); b, the asocierea of the dots with the Taurus constellation; c, Mycenaean seal.

²²¹ Hayden 2003, 274, Fig. 7.31.

Here, it might be the case of a familiar totem which they were applying on their clothing or on the bodies during some festivities. Of course, it made the connection with the mythical ancestor of the family, the bull. We cannot help noticing that the above image (Fig. 93.a4) comprises a stylization of the bird, one that is suggesting the connection between the sky and the earth. However, the dots/points and their arrangement is to be found in the Taurus constellation (Fig. 92b). On a seal in the form of a sole (Fig. 93c) appear three similar signs which may represent the bucranium or the stylization of the Cassiopeia, to which we made references some other time²²².



Fig. 93d. Mycenaean II seal.

On a seal from the Mycenaean II civilization²²³ appears a divinity who is protecting or is accompanied by two winged animals (Fig. 93d). It has the bucranium and the double axe on its head, both symbols of power. It is possible to be a representation of what later on appears in the mythology as goddess Athena.

Small tablets and the bucranium

The tablets had been always used for learning, exercising of the writing, recording some counting, memorizing some instructions, laws and others²²⁴.

Comments to some opinion concerning the Tărtăria tablets

Recently, a fellow colleague who, without being well-documented about this domain, chose to release some defamatory comments against



²²² Lazarovici Gh. et alii 2001, 277, Fig. 253.11.

²²³ Gimbutas 1989, 273, Fig. 426, Mycenaean II, cent. XV BC.

²²⁴ Lazarovici Gh. et alii 2011, passim.

Fig. 94. Tărtăria, Tablet 3, details with two stylized bucrania above the circle (the sun ?).

Nicolae Vlassa, publishing in a scientific information journal²²⁵ a study in which she is accusing him of the falsification concerning the Tărtăria tablets: *Damit geriet eine mögliche Fälschung der Tartaria-Täfelchen ins Visier*²²⁶. Her analysis started from the literature cited by N. Vlassa. Identifying similar aspects between the signs N. Vlassa was citing as being analogies (him trying to demonstrate the Sumerian origin of writing and the arguments for its short chronology), the author reaches to the conclusion that Vlassa had actually fabricated these small tablets after the Sumerian models. Without properly documenting on the problematic of the Danubian script, even today there exist numerous studies and documents, the author launched a series of personal opinion, without any fundaments, in a dishonoring manner, especially when Nicolae Vlassa was not an amateur, as the fellow colleague seems to believe. We might offer her hundred examples where different symbols/signs can be met, there are some PhD thesis well-documented on this issue, and also a series of scientific papers²²⁷. Wishing to be among the critics of N. Vlassa, she hurried into launching some new “expert” opinion, maybe just for the simple reason that she had made research on the typology of the Medieval symbolism²²⁸, but concerning the “*Danubian script*” she is obviously on the edges, the same being for the problematic of the Neolithic. Maybe the Medieval texts were copied from one paper to another and maybe our colleague is an expert in such text analysis. But manufacturing and recognizing of some archaeologic object implies knowledge about ceramics (mixture, polishing, burning etc.). There is no point to give too much attention to this issue or to lose our time with futile contra arguments, the colleague being outside this issue about the Neolithic pieces.

One or two papers that she had used, concerning the Neolithic plastic art with symbols, recommend her as a beginner for this problematic. Among the errors made by our colleague is the name of the professor Horedt, actually being Kurt Horedt and not Carol von Horedt²²⁹. The lady’s

²²⁵ Quasim 2013.

²²⁶ Quasim 2013, 309.

²²⁷ Winn 1973; 1981; 1990; 2004a; 2004b; Merlini 2009 and his bibliography concerning the different, older opinion but also a PhD thesis with more than 400 tables on the dynamism of the issue, Merlini Diss Doctorat, Sibiu, 2008; etc.

²²⁸ Erika Quasim, *Vorgeschichte und frühe Geschichte der Sprachtypologie 1500-1835*, diss doctorat, 1985. If also there she did her research in the same manner, we are doubting her objectivity and references/documentation.

²²⁹ Quasim 2013, passim; the term Vinča – Turdaş is an anachronism: the term Vinča comprises Vinča A-D phases (Milojčić 1949; Schier 1995); the term Turdaş is used for the chronological level Vinča C, but her being on linguistics, it becomes obvious why she had mistaken all these.

statement concerning the material from which the tablets had been made, from sand and clay or the expression “...*Die drei Tontäfelchen sollen ursprünglich leicht gebrannt gewesen sein, daher wurden sie zur Konservierung nachgebrannt...* “ are, in fact, old information. We have shown, on the basis of the observations of two fellow colleagues, geologists, specialized in analysis on ceramics²³⁰, that the binder had been the unburnt powdered lime, being a lot of sand and very little clay. Due to these reasons the pieces seemed to be covered in limestone deposits, even though in the same pit were deposited bones, idols, a cup, an idol from alabaster, a bracelet from *spondylus* and none of these had any limestone deposits. Certainly, neither the chief of the laboratory, a professor from the Faculty of Chemistry, nor N. Vlassa, were aware of the fact that the white substance, meaning the ‘limestone deposit’, was the binder. The pieces had not been burnt (*nachgebrant*), as the author believes and cites, this “accusation” belonging to those who had then dishonored Vlassa. We have written about the error made by the ones who had mistaken the impregnation with nitrolac, in vacuum, used for the stabilization of the “low burning” (in fact, the dissolving of the binder, made of chalk, by the acid used for “descaling”²³¹) for some ulterior burning (*nachgebrant*). Due to the binder made of unburnt powdered lime, the pieces, after their descaling, did not possess the usual aspect of the “ceramics”, this explaining the doubts of the ones that had the pieces into their hands.

Coming back to the tablets, on the upper border of the tablet 3 from Tărtăria, there are two stylized bucrania or maybe two birds, these being hard to interpret (Fig. 94b marking 1 and 2). The main element of the image is the bucranium, a cup which is pouring and a bowl (Fig. 94a-c). We have interpreted these as being related to the killing of the community bull, the blood being gathered and deposited into that bowl as an offering for the divinities connected with the fecundity and fertility of the animals, but also of the plants depicted in the upper right side.



²³⁰ PhD. Prof. Lucreția Ghergari Lucreția and PhD Prof. Corina Ionescu have written numerous studies and they have also coordinated PhD theses regarding the analysis on ceramics, their remarks being pertinent.

²³¹ Lazarovici Gh. et alii 2011, passim.

Fig. 94a-c. Tărtăria, Tablet 3, details with two stylized bucrania above the circle (the sun ?; d, Suplacul de Barcău (photo D. Ignat, processing Lazarovici Gh.).

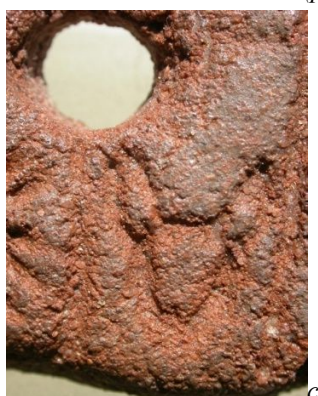
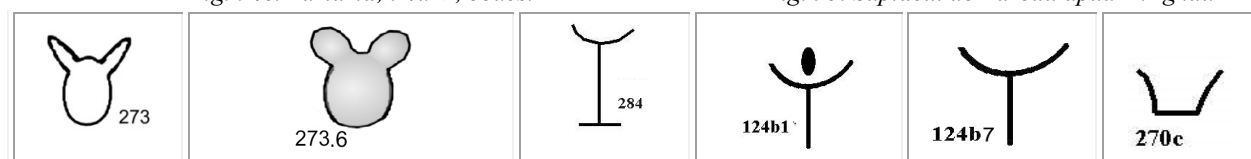


Fig. 94c. Tărtăria; 94d▼, codes.

Fig. 95. Suplacul de Barcău apud D. Ignat.



On a tablet from Suplacul de Barcău (Fig. 95)²³², on its frontal side, in the central area, which is separated through doubled lines from other two areas covered in dots, some of them suggesting spirals²³³, there are depicted 5 signs. The first of these, from the superior part (Fig. 95 marking 1) is depicting, schematically, through dots, an altar with a bucranium. The same sign is encountered in numerous symbols from the *Danube Script* (Fig. 94d).

²³² Image offered by courtesy of the regreted Doina Ignat.

²³³ In another occasion we have dealt with this type of spirals: Lazarovici C.-M., Lazarovici Gh. 2015, 54, Fig. 187.



Fig. 96. Tablet 1 from Isaiia, photo N. Ursulescu, processing Gh. Lazarovici.

On another tablet from the sanctuary at Isaiia (Fig. 96), ritually torn apart in half, is depicted a bull head above which appears a turtle. There are also some lines which seem to suggest a mask, associated to the bull head (Fig. 94d M1). The symbols / signs are numerous, and according to the context they might carry different interpretations, therefore it is not the case to insist upon them. But we cannot help making a connection between this piece, coming from a sanctuary, and the bucrania from Sanctuary 2 or from the domestic sanctuary P126 in Parța²³⁴, but also from other sanctuaries, like the ones in Kormadin, Vinča, Pločnik and others²³⁵.

The depiction of the bull head appears on numerous Sumerian seals associated with other signs, each of them having their role and their significations, related to certain counting, contracts etc. Even in the oldest/ancient alphabets, the letter “A” or the letter “a”, like in the Wadi-Hiero alphabet²³⁶, had as its starting point a bull head, which is underlining the role played by the bull in the mythologies concerning the genesis.

This different depiction of the heads, frontal side, profile/sideways, oblique, made E. Quasim believe that Vlassa set his inspiration on them. We have in our data basis over 82 symbols of bucrania and over 40 types of bucrania, on numerous categories of objects, but we do not consider/perceive them as being copied or falsified.

²³⁴ Lazarovici Gh. et alii 1985, 55, Fig. VI/5-7; 2011, I.1, 157-159, 275, Fig. 121, 166b, 168, 184, 190, 192, 249, 251; Lazarovici C.-M., Lazarovici Gh. 2006, 352-355.

²³⁵ Jovanović, Glisić 1961; Jovanović 1991; Marangou 1992, 185; Lazarovici Gh. et alii 2001, I.1, 197, 276, 250.3; Lazarovici C.-M., Lazarovici Gh. 2006, 197, Fig. III.1, IIIa.80-81; Staljo 1986, cat. 218, 250; Garašanin D. 1968, Fig. 28; Babović 1984, cat. 212.

²³⁶ *** *Der Turmbau zu Babel*, 2003, IIIA, 174-175.

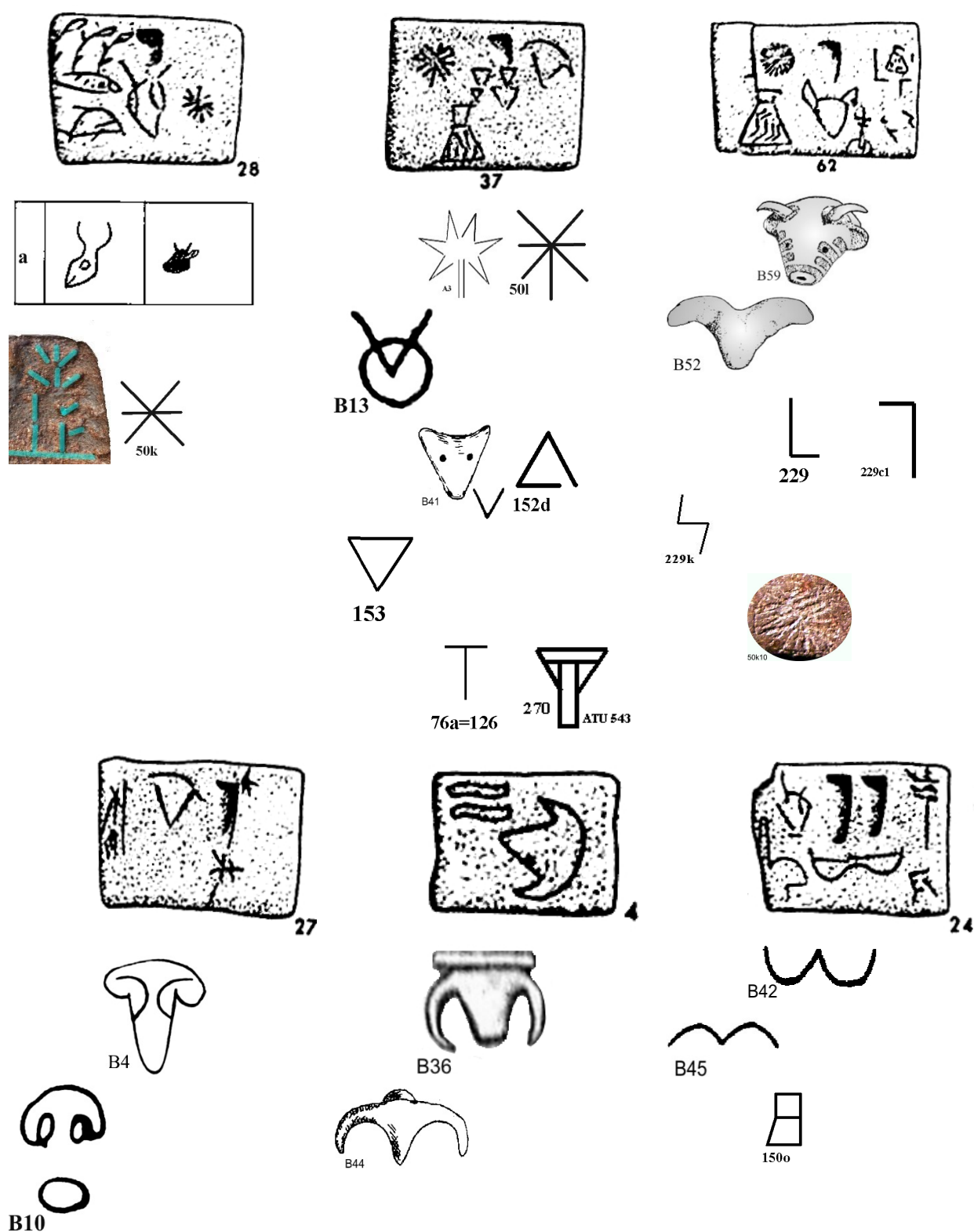


Fig. 97. Sumerian tablets with symbols, with analogies to the symbols and signs from the Danube Script: a, Babylon Tower Wadi-Hiero-Semitic 1, the other codes from the DS; 50k10, Cosăuți, the sun.

Quasim has seen the tablets as being just some copies/imitations, in the same manner the medieval texts were copied. In Fig. 97 we picked a few from the Sumerian tablets, and next to them we presented the analogies with our codes, referring to signs and symbols from the „*Danube Script*”.

Some signs and symbols we encounter on the megaliths from different areas of Egypt, Sinai, Tassili or from Northern Europe. These facts are showing that at the bottom of all types of writing are to be found the signs and symbols, some ancient ones, from the Paleolithic, Mesolithic, but most of them are from the Neolithic, from the South of the Central Europe. During the Copper Age, the signs of the Danubian civilizations and from the Balkans have been maintained/perpetuated. The Cucuteni culture was using mostly the symbols than the signs.

Bucrania and the throne



a

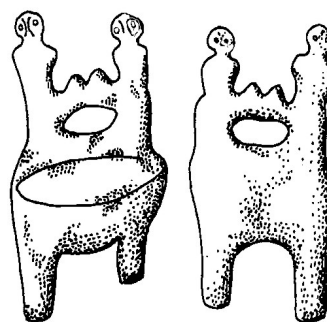


b

Fig. 98. Thrones with bucrania: a, the Precucuteni culture, Isaiia, throne no. 7; b, the Trypillia culture, Timkovo, throne with its back ended with a bucranium;

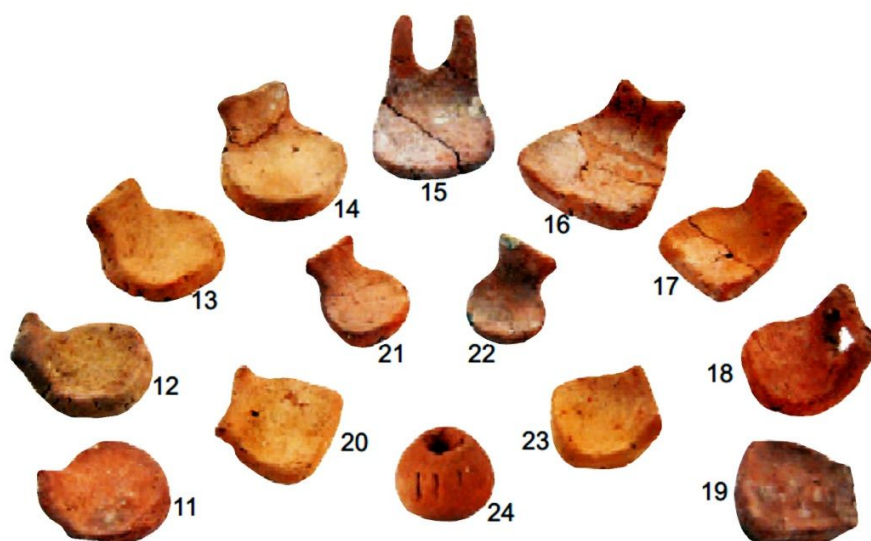


c



d

c-d, the throne from Lipcani, photo and drawing (front-back).



Pl. X. Poduri-"DI. Ghindaru". "Soborul zeițelor" (II).
(după Monah și colab., 2003b).

Fig. 99. Poduri-Dealul Ghindaru, apud Monah et alii 2003.

when are placed two figures on the back, then the bucranium is in between (Fig. 98). The thrones sometimes have the same forms, even if they have been discovered in different sites, lying at great distance (see Fig. 98). These are showing that the form, their role, maybe even their functionality have obeyed some mythological "cannons". Some cuts from the edge of the thrones from Timkovo are identical with those from Isaiia (compare Fig. 100a.3, 5 with 100b.1, 3). More, those thrones have the form of their backs also identical (compare 100a.4 with 100b1, 3).



Fig. 100a. Timkovo, 1-3 thrones with the back in the form of horns.

The most interesting ones are the thrones from Poduri and Isaiia. At Poduri, more than half of the thrones, so 13 of them have obvious horns. These are being associated with biggest statuettes. Those were suggesting the fecundity, and the association with the bull symbol reinforces the idea of the

fecundity. Among the seven pieces from Timkovo, illustrated by us (Fig. 99.b and Fig. 100a), at four of them we encounter, in an obvious manner, the idea of the back in the form of the horns. It is not at all our intention to generalize, these are being just observations.

²³⁷ ***Cucuteni-Trypillia 2008, Cat. R.159, 160.

The pieces from Isaiia (for 9 among 13, the bucranium being obvious)²³⁸ and Poduri belong to the Precucuteni culture, whose connections/relations to the South are clear, even if some of our fellow colleagues keep trying to genetically relate them only with the linear civilization, in which the plastic art and even the thrones are very rare²³⁹, as opposed to the Balkan world where these are more frequently encountered. The throne no. 7 from Isaiia has analogies with the one from Timkovo (compare Fig. 100).



Fig. 100b-c. Thrones with signs: b, Isaiia; c, codes from the DS on thrones.



Fig. 100d. Throne, the Trypillia culture, The Platar Collection.

We have to note also that the thrones with a bull head have few signs. Unfortunately, we do not know exactly to which idol corresponded the throne²⁴⁰.

In the Platar collection, from the Trypillia culture, exists a throne with horns which has, on its panel, two signs (Fig. 100d): 1) code DS, 50x is a variant of X or the Cross of St. Andrew, the difference, as compared with the Cross of St. Andrew, lying in the fact that each line has a dot at

its end and they are not uniting themselves; 2) between the arms of the cross it has four “V”-es (DS, code 1a).

²³⁸ Ursulescu, Tencariu 2006, 108-119, the small chairs 2-4, 7-8, 10-11,13.

²³⁹ Erfurt, Müller-Karpe 1968.

Three of the thrones from Isaiia have signs and symbols: the spiral which also appears on the tablets (Fig. 100b-c)²⁴¹, elements that are frequently encountered in the *Danube Script*.

Actually, in the Precucuteni culture, starting even from 1974, Silvia Marinescu-Bîlcu had published a few models of the thrones, most of them with bucrania or horns.

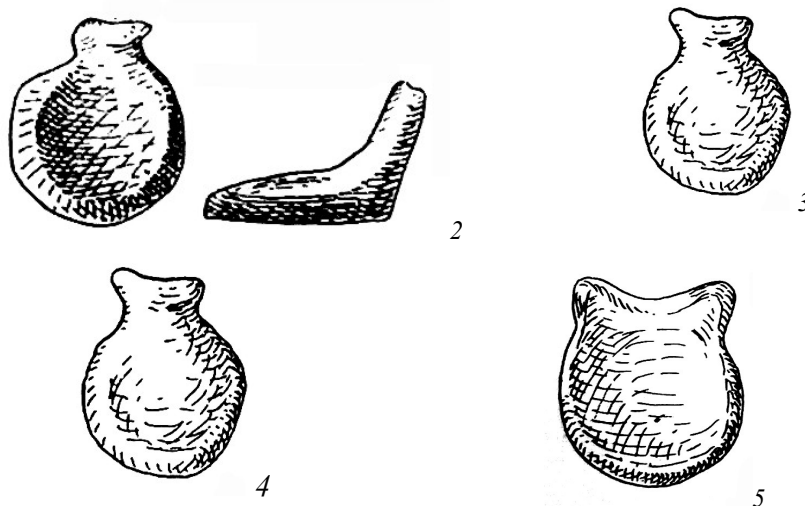
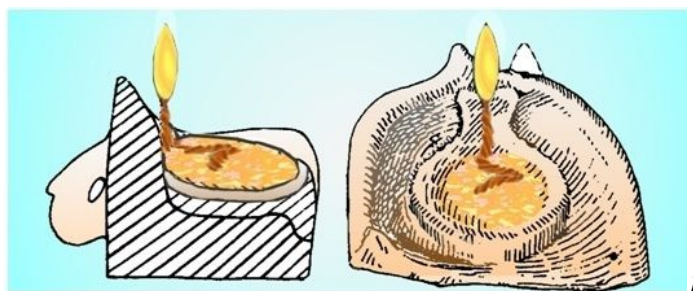


Fig. 101. Thrones, the Precucuteni culture: 1-3, 5, Târpești; 4, Izvoare.

with a role related to the numerology of the feminine calendar. In the sanctuary from Sabatinovka, from the same time, on the monumental throne was sitting the priestess, and on the bench next to the sanctuary there were put in a row 21 idols also from the cultic inventory of the priestess's. On the monumental throne was sitting the priestess who was representing the Great Mother, in the case of some rituals taking part in the sanctuary. More, on one of the thrones appears another one, smaller. This idea is extremely interesting, because from it we can draw the conclusion that the throne with horns is also considered a divine object, sitting like the idols on a throne. Therefore, the symbols from the thrones, just like the idols and other cult objects, are defying a certain divinity, and the character sitting on the throne or placed on a throne receives the same attributes or the sacred force

In fact, on the thrones were sited the idols which had a certain signification in the prehistoric mythology.

Therefore, on the thrones from the cultic inventories of some priestesses from the Precucuteni culture (Poduri, *The Hoard of the Goddesses* and Isaiia – *The Treasure*) were sitting some divinities

²⁴⁰ The Platar Collection, *Enciclopedia Tripolskoi* 2004, II, throne.

²⁴¹ Lazarovici C.-M., Lazarovici Gh. 2015, 43 ff.

of the throne. In this case it is about the *throne of Light/The Light Throne*, the representative divinity of light. In fact, we have seen numerous cases in which the cult small altars served as tables for idols, rush lights or lamps.



Fig. 102. Isaiia - Balta Popii, throne with incised decoration.

A throne from Isaiia - *Balta Popii* (Fig. 102) has on its superior part a decoration extremely interesting, practically formed by three arcs, three vaults in the form of an “U” turned upside down, completed by other three lines, forming number 9. At their ends there are other shorter lines which are coming down on the edge of the throne/chair. Due to the lack of

some drawing we cannot follow the lines very clearly, especially the short ones, and to identify the exact number of them. From these reasons we have some doubts regarding our interpretations. Some of the lines have been doubled by some thinner ones or by those that are detaching from the arcs: among them, the big arcs are 9, and the shorter ones are 7 or 9 (a clear response we might give after seeing a good drawing).

The association of the number 7 with 9 makes us think about the sacred number 7 (even at Isaiia: 7 big statuettes, 7 medium ones, 7 small, and at Poduri, some similar numbers²⁴²), and number 9 is also sacred, being connected especially to the life, to the nine months of the gestation²⁴³. These are leading to number 21 (3 x 7) or 27 (3 x 9), some sacred numbers in the mythological numerology of the Neolithic and of the prehistory, in general.

²⁴² Often we have analyzed the sacred character of the number 7: Ursulescu 2001, 65; Ursulescu, Tencariu 2006, 108-119; in our data bases we have 67 recordings, often taken into consideration: Lazarovici Gh. et alii 2001, I.1, 33-34, Fig. 12; 246, 286, 292; 2003, 164-165; Lazarovici Gh. 2001, 61; Lazarovici Gh., Petrescu 2003, 164, Fig. 22; Lazarovici C.-M., Lazarovici Gh. 2006, 118, 168-174, Fig. IIIa 54-5; 2015, 15-17, 68, 135, 164, 176, 185, 197, 216, 219, 235, 311; other authors: Monah 1982, 11, Fig. 12; 1997, 35; Monah et alii 1983, 15; Eliade 1981, 67; 1991, 34; Dumitrescu Vl. 1974, 189; *Cucuteni* 1997, 109, cat. 14a-d; Neagu 1999, 22; 2000, 29-30; 2003, 92; Neagu, Parnic, Rădulescu 2001.

²⁴³ Petrescu-Dîmbovița 1952, 14; Florescu A. C. 1959, 183 sqq; Florescu A. C., Florescu M. 1961, 79 sqq; apud Monah 1997, 37, n. 72; Lazarovici C.-M. 2004, 47, 49 ff., Fig. 1; Germann, Resch 1981; Lazarovici Gh. et alii 2001, I.2, 33-34, Fig. 12; Dumitrescu Vl. et alii 1954, 435-436, pl. CXXIV.5, Fig. 41.6.

Bucranium on tools

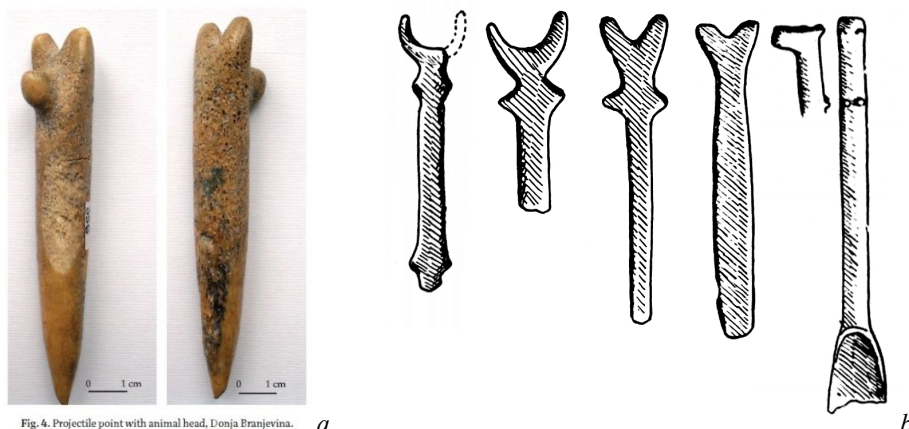


Fig. 4. Projectile point with animal head, Donja Dranjevina.

Fig. 103. Tools with the head as a bucranium: a, Donja Dranjevina, the Starčevo-Criș culture; b, Turdaș.

Our data and our information are pretty rare about this issue. A dagger or a stiletto made of a horn or from the wall of a big bone is having on the head of the piece a bucranium which might be from

any sort of an animal (Fig. 103a). These are not analyses made on the piece itself, therefore its functionality is hard to be indicated here, but if there would be blood remains or of some other type, some conclusions might be drawn. Such pieces appear during the Early Neolithic, where on some spatule appears the head of an animal, but numerous ones are belonging to the Turdaș culture (Fig. 103b²⁴⁴) and others (Fig. 107a.4).

BUCRANIUM ON VESSELS

Vessels show many and varied situations. Many of them are special pots, some are used for the storage of provisions (in the broad sense) and others are vessels used for lighting or for religious rituals. Some of them represent qualities of the bucranium related to the animal or to the meaning of the bucranium (horn/horns, forehead, eyes, nose, ears), every detail having a particular significance, sometimes obvious, sometimes assumed. It is difficult to draw a border line between the role of the bucranium on the vessels, and many of our assumptions cannot be fully demonstrated. But their artistic appearance, their place, shape, decoration, some data related to numerology, signs and symbols may be understood or assumed.

Zoomorphic vessels with bucrania and a hole in the back

This type appears in many civilizations either in the form of zoomorphic idols or as small vessels, especially in the Cucuteni culture, where the body shape is elegantly and expressively

²⁴⁴ Roska 1941, pl. LXV.13-14, LXVII.9.10, 14-15; Nandris 1972.

presented with traces of painting. From the linear civilization in Hienheim²⁴⁵ we have a zoomorphic vessel with strong horns. Its wide mouth allowed the usage for different products.

N. Vlassa stated that some house-shaped vessels (zoomorphic or ornitomorphic) were used for storing seeds²⁴⁶.

We have some zoomorphic vessels with narrow and cone-trunk mouth, which allowed the use of a tap. In these cases, we believe that they were used for storing various liquids which may be sacred, for healing, as well as other oils or wax for lighting. Jannos Makkay was the one who considered them as lamps, especially the piece from Ariusd, but also others in Transylvania and Slovakia²⁴⁷ from the Late Neolithic and Copper Age.

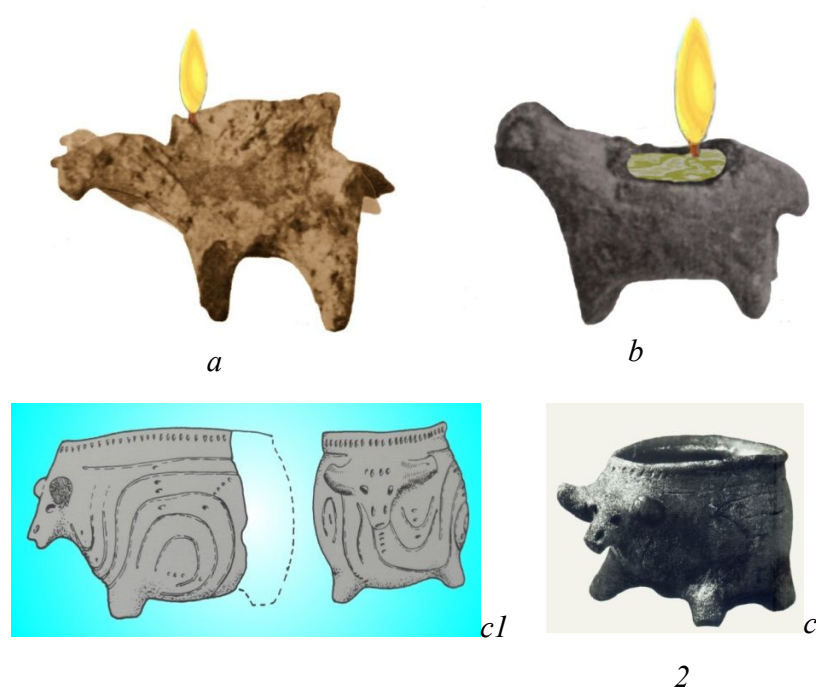


Fig. 104. Vessels with bucrania, lamps and for storing liquids:
a- b, Ariusd (NM Budapest, apud Makkay 1969, pl. XXIII.5 and Sztancsuj);
c, Hienheim (apud Gimbutas 1984, 297, fig. 414.2).

In the Cucuteni-
Trypillia culture these
zoomorphic/animal-shaped
vessels with bucrania are true
works of art through expressive
figures and artistic
craftsmanship. The ones in the
GKK culture (Gumelnița-
Karanovo-Kodjadjermen)
through which the ancient
artists have created true works
of art are not less expressive.
Due to their level of
development we must assume
also the burning of some
scented oils.

There are numerous pieces like this, whole or fragmented, but they cannot all be illustrated.

²⁴⁵ Gimbutas 1989, 267, Fig. 414.2 .

²⁴⁶ Vlassa 1979.

²⁴⁷ Makkay 1969, pl. XXII-XXV.



Fig. 105. Vessels with bucranium protomes for keeping liquids: a, Traian-Dealul Fântânilor; b, Vărătic V; c, Koşilivți; d, Karanovo (Gimbutas); e, Sărata Monteoru, bucrania and snakes (apud Dumitrescu Vl. 1979, Fig. 56).

Protomes on vessels with bucranium

Some of these replace the handles on some vessels and other times they define the characteristics of the vessel or they are related to its content. Each case is interesting. Those who had placed these protomes had at its core a mythology connected with the functions of the bucranium, but there had been involved also aesthetic and artistic elements. Every civilization has its specificity. For these reasons our analysis will focus on the civilizations instead of the evolution in time. The Starčevo-Koros vessels rarely have representations of bucrania (Fig. 109.1), only animal representations (deer, roe deer, goat, kid)²⁴⁸.

²⁴⁸ Kutzián 1944, pl. II.1, XVII.1, XX.1b, XLI.8-9, XLI.8, XLII.3, XLI.2, LVIII.1.

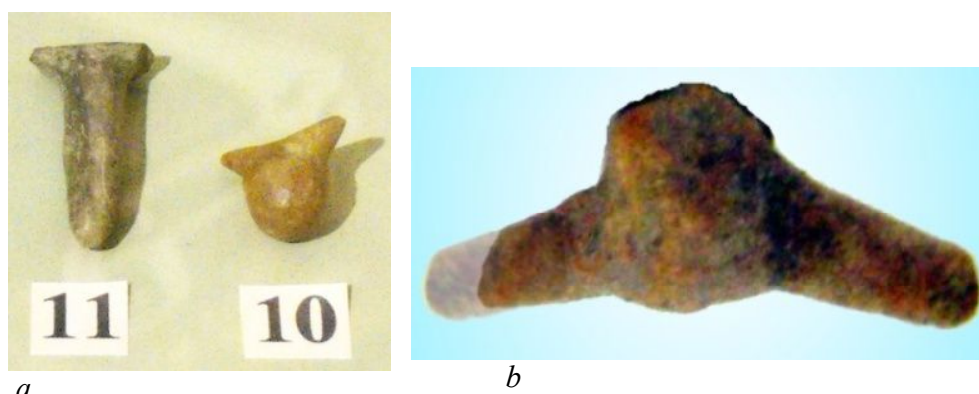
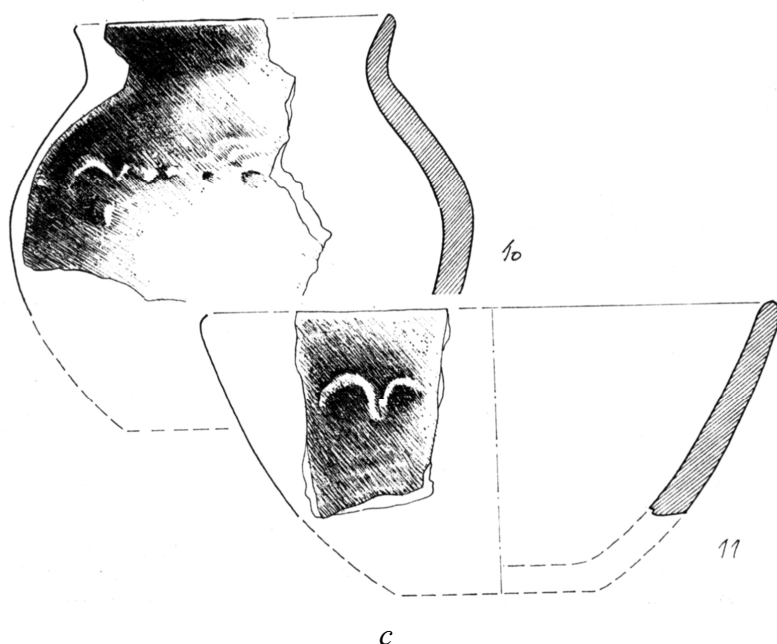


Fig. 106. Bucrania from the Starčevo-Criș culture (FNT): a.11, Nevestino; a.10, Saparevo Banja; b, Copăcele-Govora; c, Moghila – Bitola.

Those who had placed these protomes had at its core a mythology connected with the functions of the bucranium, but there had been involved also aesthetic and

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²⁴⁹ Kutzián 1944, pl. II.1, XVII.1, XX.1b, XLI.8-9, XLI.8, XLII.3, XLI.2, LVIII.1.



To give an example, in Trestiana, one of the most complex monographs, the bucranium does not appear in the 150 drawings²⁵⁰. The most popular bucrania in the Starčevo-Criș culture are: bucrania, the "T" amulets (fig. 106a) labrets, nail-cones; some could be used for fishing, etc.²⁵¹. They are not on vessels but are made of clay. A house replica in Porodin has the oven with bucranium (Fig. 44a)²⁵² and also in those areas in the village of

Moghila-Bitola two bucrania appear on vessels, similar to our Polychromy-Vinča (Fig.1-106 c).

²⁵⁰ Popușoi 2005.

²⁵¹ Typology: Lazarovici Gh. 2006, tab. 18, annex 18 and bibl.; Stanković 1983, pl. XXXIV-XL and others with references: Chohadjev St. 2001, 175, Fig. 93.1-2; Vitezović 2015, Fig. 2; Nikolić, Zečević 2001, 4.

²⁵² Müller-Karpe 1968, II, Taf. 150.1.

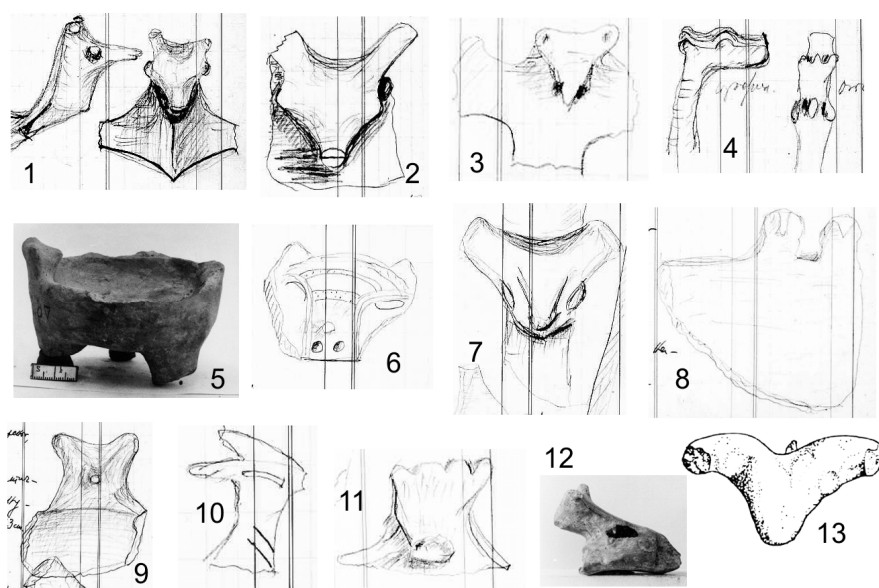


Fig. 107a. Protomes on vessels and altars, Vinča culture: 1-12, Vinča-BB; 13, Banjica, column fragment?

In the Vinča culture and its related groups or the ones influenced by it, from the Late Neolithic (Vinča C, Turdaş, Tisa, Gradešnica etc.) there is an explosion of the bucrania representations.

The Turdaş culture, at Vinča C-D level (keep in mind the migration in the area of

Vişac-At), develops bucrania, horns, protomes in their own style, but there are also elements in common with the Vinča elements. From the manuscript of Zsofia Torma's collection²⁵³ but also the publication of Marton Roska²⁵⁴ we have many examples (Fig. 107). They all have horns. There are two which are outstanding: one with the horns one above another (Fig. 107b.20); and one that has very large horns, from which we infer that there could be a wild bull or a bull (Fig. 107.a.11). Sometimes only the eyes are shown (Fig. 107a.8, 107b.16, 18). From Nandru there is a protoma with ram horns (Fig. 107.N).

²⁵³ Torma 1897, 31, XXII, protomes and Nandru.

²⁵⁴ Roska 1941, pl. 121, 144 et al.

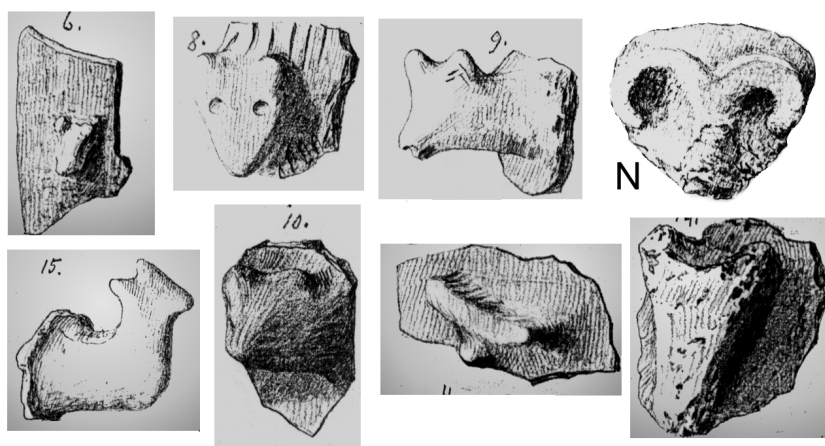
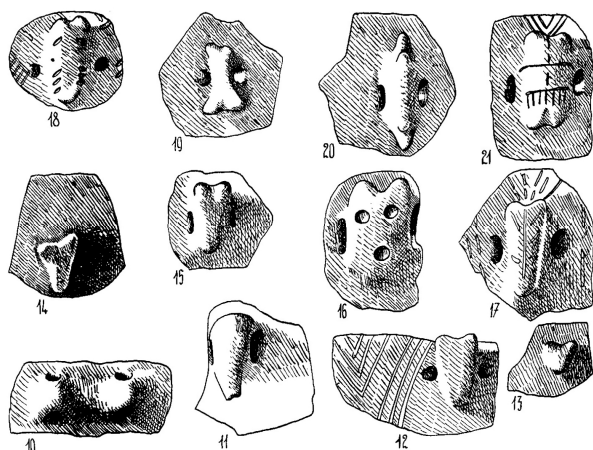


Fig. 107b. Protomes ▲ from Turdaş; N, from Nandru, from the case according to the manuscript of Zsofia Torma 1897; c, ▼ after Marton Roska; d, photo by Lazarovici Gh.

fertility, the heavenly bull being invoked, as we believe).



The eyes are rendered by oblique cuts in some cases, suggesting a mask (Fig. 107b.17-18,107c.2). Many can serve as handles, others have the bucranium on the edge and pointing towards the contents of the vessel (Fig. 107c.11) as in the Vinča culture (Fig. 106.9). Some of them are decorated with the specificity of the Turdaş culture (Fig. 107c.1-2).

The bull or ram horns placed on a ceramic fragment from the Nandru Cave, where Zsofia Torma had been digging, are a bit different (Fig. 107b).

Often the pieces are made with artistic taste, the horns and muzzle are expressive, like the piece from Turdaş, with the head towards the interior of the vessel, similar to the Vinča ones (Fig. 106.5, v9).

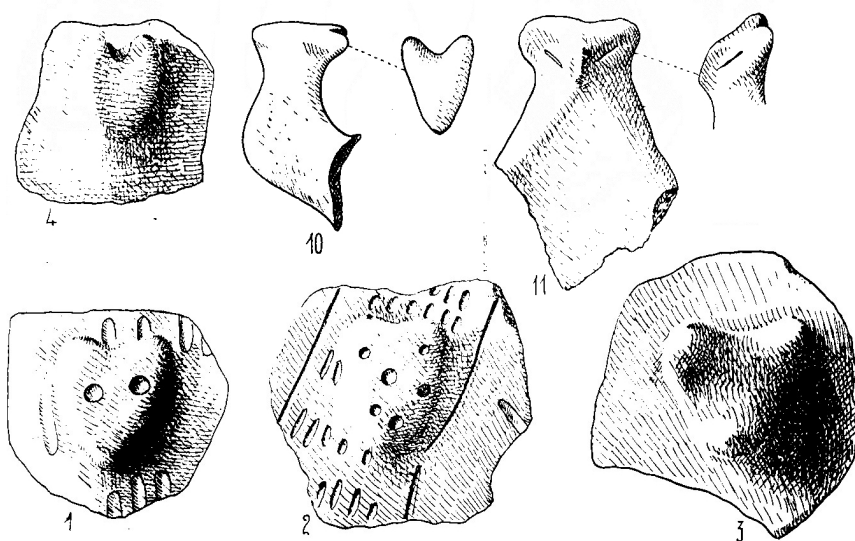


Fig. 107d. Turdaş Protomes, after Roska 1941, pl. 144.

domestic altar (a large piece from Gorzsa, Fig. 108b.2), the bucrania are associated with religious complexes and rituals. Above we have presented some vessels with bucranium protomes instead of handles (Fig. 57).

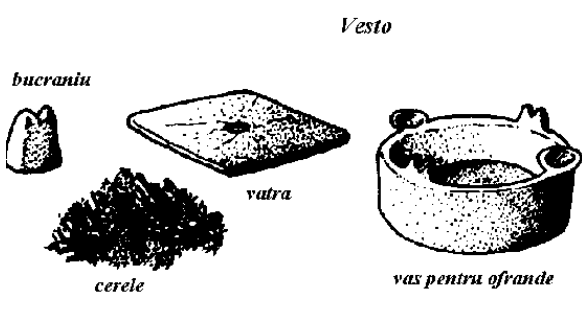


Fig. 108a. Bucrania in the Szakálhát – Tisa cultures: a, Vestó- Mágor; b, Gorzsa.

²⁵⁵ Horváth, Paluch 2005, cat. 73-74.



Fig. 108b. Bucrania: 1, ***Entiklopedia Tripolskoi 2004; 2, Geangoești, after Ilie, Dumitru 2008; 3, Berești-Dealul Bulgaru, The History Museum in Galați; 4, Raiki-Kurinogo?²⁵⁷; 5, Poienеști-Valea Caselor, Starčevo-Criș, apud Lazarovici C.-M., Babeș 2015, Gr. 8 under burried ??.

²⁵⁶ Müller-Karpe 1968, pl.199.K: ***Neolithische Kunst 2008, cat. 108, 109.

²⁵⁷ Enticlopedia Tripolskoi 2004, vol. II, Kurinogo.

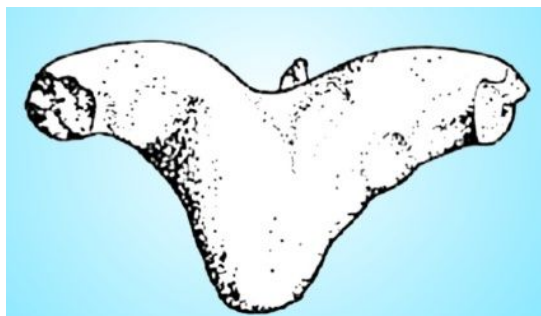


6

Fig. 108.6, Ignatenkovi Gora²⁵⁸;

products.

For some of them, the horns and figure/face of the bull have a strong artistic modelling (Fig. 58.6-7). It should be noted that the figures do not always represent the bull, they can represent in terms of horns, a ram or a goat, all related to the fertility of the herds. Some of the vessels can serve for the preparation or preservation of milk



1



2



3



4

Fig. 108c. 1, Banjica; 2, Pvkakia, photo Lazarovici Gh.; 3, passim (Mareş 2009) 4, Darabani-Zamčesko; 5, Hoiseşti - La Pod.

²⁵⁸ Videiko, in ****Entiklopedia Tripolskoi* 2004, s.v.

From a simple modelling, where the bucranium is only suggested, there are given also allegorical representations in which we find the later myths from the Hellenistic civilization: the myth of Zeus and Europe (Fig. 59.1)²⁵⁹.

Few of them exist also in the Foeni group in Transylvania²⁶⁰, influenced, of course, by the Vinča C-Turdaş phase. Also under the influence of the Vinča culture, in Hungary, in the Szakálhát and Tisa cultures there are some bucranium protomes.

One is placed on the edge of a vessel from the Vestő – Mágor sanctuary (Fig. 108a) and another one is probably a monumental piece from Gorzsa (Fig. 108b)²⁶¹, with a mask similar to those from Turdaş (Fig. 107a.a0, 107.b16; 107c.1).

Some of the vessels with human figure from the Szakálhát culture, also called the "Venus" ones, have bucranium protomes on their shoulder, suggesting the idea of an orant (fig. 109.a-b, d)²⁶². As it can be noticed, many are part of the cultic inventory of the community or domestic altars. Some vessels are used for burning oil, bees wax or grease in rituals or for keeping the light.



²⁵⁹ Căscioarele: Dumirescu Vl. 1965; 1970; Lazarovici C.-M., Lazarovici Gh. 2006, 534-537.

²⁶⁰ Gligor 2009, pl. CXXIV.9, CLV.1-2, CLVII.3-4.

²⁶¹ Vestő – Mágor, Hegedűs, Makkay 1987; Gorzsa, Horváth, Paluch 2005, cat. 140.

²⁶² Horváth, Paluch 2005, Szentes-*Vármegzeháza* and Szentes-*Jacsorpárt*, cat. 73a-b.



◀c▶

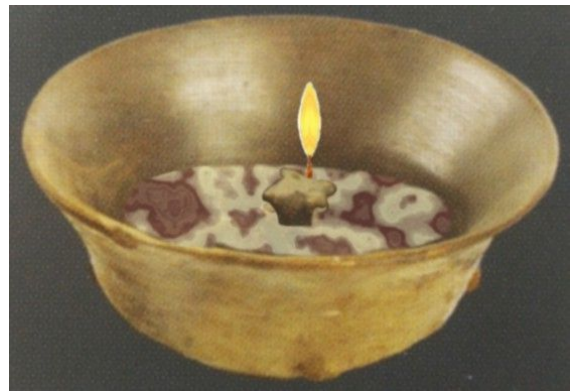
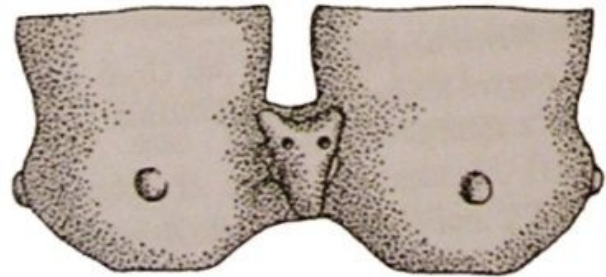


Fig. 109: Protoma vessels: a, Szegvár-Tűzköves; b, Szentes-Jacsorpárt; c, lamp-vessel having inside a bucranium protoma, Gorzsa.



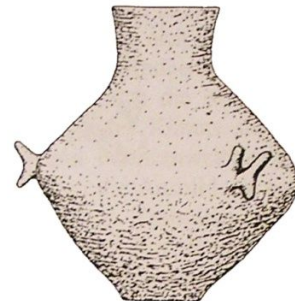
Fig. 109d. Orant vessel, Szentes-Jacsorpárt.



e1 Sopot-Lengyel.



e2



3

Fig. 109e. Bucrania on the vessels from the cultures of: 2, Sopot; 3, Sopot-Lengyel.

In the cultures of Sopot (Gornji Brezovljani, Fig. 109e.1²⁶³) and Sopot-Lengyel (Fig. 109e.2-3²⁶⁴), which had developed based on the Vinča culture, we encounter the same type of protomes with animal bucrania (Fig. 108) as in Turdaş (Fig. 107a8, b.16, c1).

Also based on the Vinča culture or on the civilizations related to it, such as the Hvar culture in Croatia, there appears a number of bucrania on the vessels (Fig. 110) from Smilcic²⁶⁵.

²⁶³ *** *PraJugZem* 1979, II, tab. LII.9.



Fig. 110. Bucrania on vessels, Hvar Culture, Croatia.



Fig. 111. Gumelnița culture: a, Oltenița – Măgura Gumelnița, orant vessel with horns; b, Căscioarele, bucranium mask with figure placed between the horns.

In the Gumelnița culture there exist some worship vessels, true masterpieces that have horn-shaped arms in orant position; some have a ball at the tip of the horn to suggest the brightness of the horn (Fig. 111a), but we cannot exclude the representation of a phallus, too.

Here we have to mention the mask from Cascioarele, an allegory of the later myth of Zeus and Europe, belonging to the Greek mythology²⁶⁶.

Several discoveries from Italy present the bucranium, especially the horns, with a certain styling of the bull or ram head. The horn and the bucranium are depicted very suggestively and with

²⁶⁴ Kalicz 1998, Fig. 16, 61.

²⁶⁵ *** *PraJugoZem* 1979, II, Tab. XCII. 6, 7, 8, 11.

²⁶⁶ Căscioarele: Dumirescu Vl. 1976; Andreescu 2002, pl. 39.1.

great mastery. The handles have bucrania on them, some have the profile of a ram horn and a series of combinations of the horn, handle and bucranium (Fig. 112 A, B1-3, 5, C, D, E2-4, F1-2).

In all the locations/stations, the handles seem to be rendered by the same potters/pottery artists. They had made from the protoma handle a work of art full of symbolism.

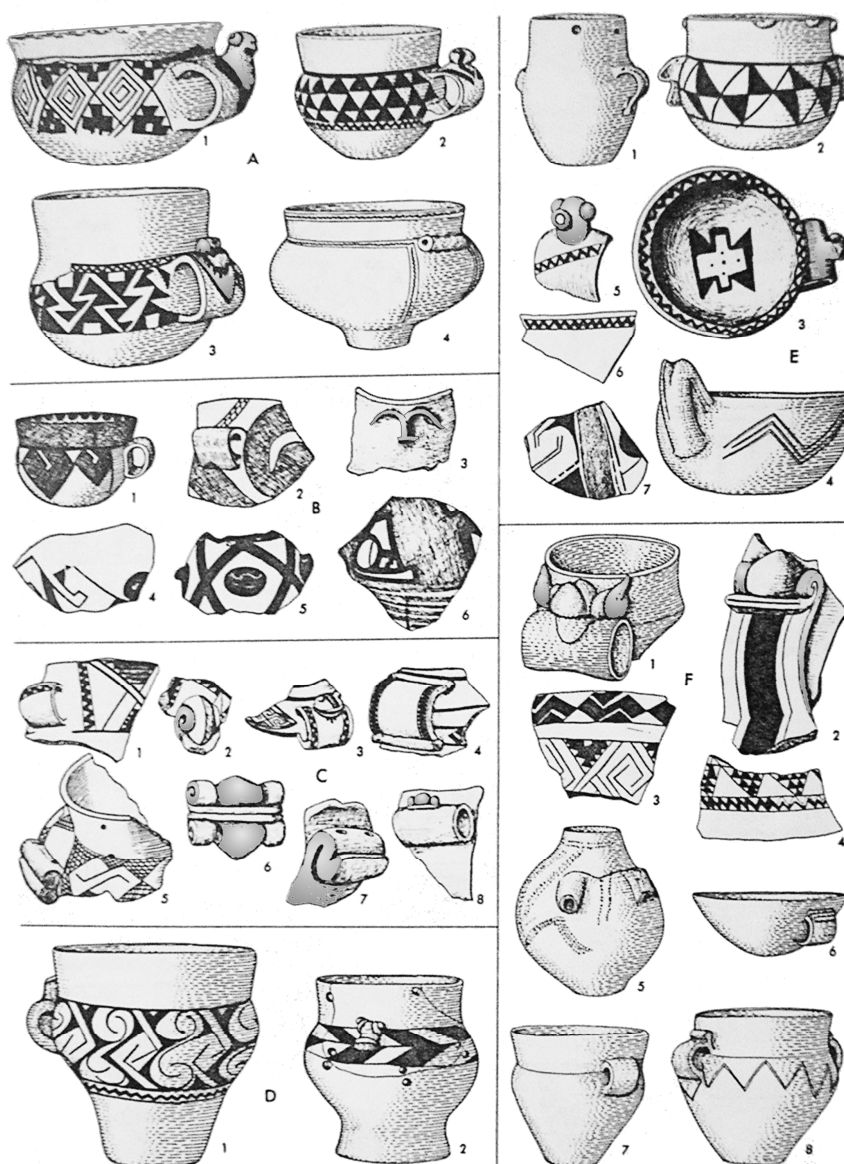


Fig. 112. Vessels with bucranium-shaped handles: A, Serra d'Alto; B, Grotta Scalara; C, Scoglio del Tomo, Monte Peellegrino, Leporano, Ostuni, Molfeta, Setteponti (apud Müller-Karpe 1968, Taf. 259).

Anthropo-zoomorphic vessels

During the Copper Age, the anthropomorphic and zoomorphic vessels, also the ornitomorphic ones, may be considered artistic masterpieces. The unknown artists, like in the art of painting, belonged to distinguished/genuine ceramics-schools, combining there the technical and artistic features.

In the Gumelnița culture, we have encountered above many situations (Fig. 44c,f; 62d, 64, 69b) with a true cult of the horn (Fig. 61d), some of the pieces being mythological and artistic masterpieces (Fig. 111, 108b.2).

In the Cucuteni culture, in numerous settlements are met the bucranium vessels (Hoisești ²⁶⁷; Poienеști ²⁶⁸), and sometimes as in the Gumelnița cases, as we have seen above (fig. 118), the handles being horn-shaped but not always expressive, one or two horns being depicted, having the functional role of a handle ²⁶⁹ (fig. 114).

Most of the times, those containers are rightfully considered to be cultic, because the bull or its symbols, just like the signs on the vessels from the Vinča, the Turdaș cultures or others, are enriching/empowering the vessel or its content with the force, the energy of the symbol or of the gestures made by the priests or laity during the invoking process, in accordance with their beliefs or rituals.

²⁶⁷ *** *Cucuteni 2009*, cat. 83; Bodi 2010, pl. 57-64.

²⁶⁸ Lazarovici C.-M., Babeș 2015, Fig. II.54, II.108.

²⁶⁹ Lazarovici C.-M. et al. 2009, cat. 117.



Fig. VIII.82. Fragment din alt castron cu protomă antropomorfizată, după V. Chirica, M.-C. Văleanu 2008, fig. 68.



Fig. VIII.83. Cele două fragmente de castroane cu protomă antropomorfizată, după V. Chirica, M.-C. Văleanu 2008, fig. 66.

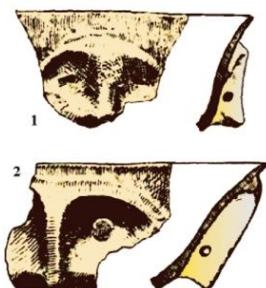


Fig. VIII.84. Două fragmente de castroane cu protomă antropomorfizată, după H. Dumitrescu 1933, fig. 25/1-2.



Fig. VIII.85. Castron cu protomă antropomorfizată (= fig. VIII.84/1), descoperit de H. Dumitrescu, colecția Institutului de arheologie București.

Looking at a larger scale, in space and time of the pre- and proto-historic or historic times, we may notice the existence of the same kind of beliefs and rituals. Some of them had been adopted by different religions, as well as in the case of certain holidays, maintaining its artistic or symbolic element. Several cultic vessels from the Cucuteni culture present a bucranium body or the horns of the bull on their neck.

Related to these, there is an interpretation referring to the *celestial bull* ²⁷⁰ linked to the more recent discovery of a fragment with a bucranium mask in Ruginoasa. The digging of Hortensia Dumitrescu in Ruginoasa showed two similar fragments²⁷¹. The celestial attribute also implies the idea of being extremely beautiful, wonderful, divine (DEXonline). From all the above, we may notice that even from the ancient times, the artists, often anonymous, had in their imagination this image of the bull, starting from the Paleolithic (Fig. 1a), to the

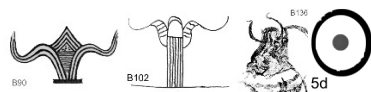


Fig. 113b. Ruginoasa "The Celestial Bull", processing by Gh. Lazarovici apud Chirica V., Văleanu 2008.

protohistoric, Sumerian era²⁷².

²⁷⁰ Chirica V., Văleanu 2008, 100, 123 ff.

²⁷¹ Dumitrescu H. 1933, Fig. 25.1-2; Lazarovici C.-M., Lazarovici Gh. 2012, Fig. VIII. 84-85.

²⁷² Krammer 1962, 136-137, Fig. 30.



Fig. 113c. Cucuteni vessels associated with the moon and the horn: 1, Tg. Ocna Podei; 2, Hoisești- La Pod; 3, codes with analogies of signs and symbols in Fig. 113.

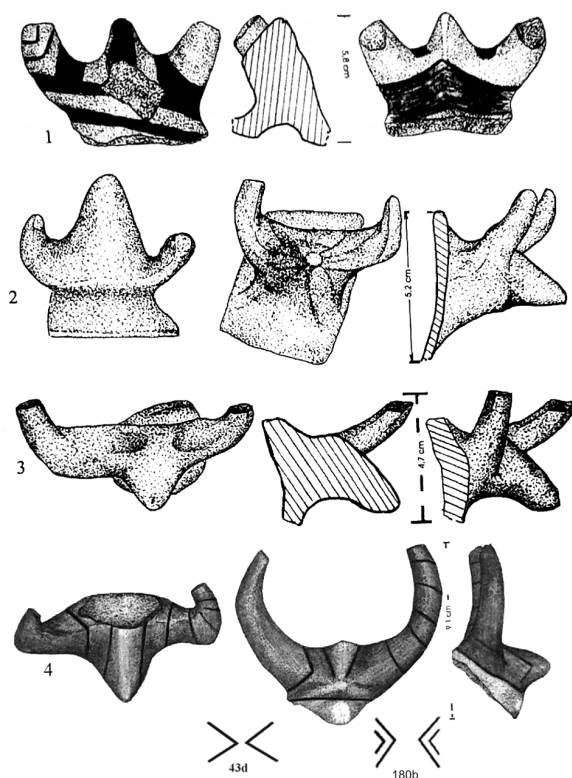


Fig. 114a. Hoisești-La Pod, Cucuteni A3, protomes with bull head on the edge, apud Bodi 2010

In the case of the four vessels with bull bucrania, two of them beautifully painted, we see in the decoration a series of symbols that are implying some alternatives: the Sun/daylight (bright eyes Fig.113b), the red/evening light and the Moon/night light, yellow light (Fig. 113.4, Ruginoasa) or silver light.

The vessel from Târgu Ocna-Podei (Fig. 113c.a²⁷³), often quoted in the specific literature, has between the horns the moon crossed by a stripe in the shape of St. Andrew's Cross, with analogies in the Cretan civilization (code DS B97)²⁷⁴. This sign appears also with other bucrania with a cross or a triangle, see above the DS codes 89, 90, 91²⁷⁵.

The vessel from Hoisești - *La pod*²⁷⁶, with its shape as a human head, has zoomorphic eyes and nose, depicting the image, the glance of the celestial bull. On its neck, inside a shape like a diamond, there is depicted a star, most probably the sun.

Also from Hoisești, we point out the existence of a large number of vessels with a bucranium on the edge, having very expressive horns, some of them presenting traces of painting (Fig. 114.1,4). The horns of the bull and its muzzle are very expressive. According to the information received from our colleague, the number of pieces discovered in Hoisești was almost similar to the number of discoveries from the Cucuteni area. This observation must be underlined here because it emphasizes the special preference of the residents, or of those living in the analyzed dwellings, for the cult of the bull.

Another example of the bucranium from Hoisești-*La Pod* (Fig. 114.4²⁷⁷) had a "V" sign on its forehead, and the eyes are depicted through two opposite "V" (code DS 43d and 180b). Such symbol-signs appear in Turdaș on a small altar²⁷⁸ and also on some idols from the Banat culture, in Parța (the Agotha²⁷⁹ collection).

²⁷³ Gimbutas 1989, 268, Fig. 415, Tg. Ocna –Podei.

²⁷⁴ B97 Creta, Golan 2003, 132, Fig. 124.

²⁷⁵ B89, apud Golan 2003, 132, Fig. 124; B90, Golan 2003, 132, Fig. 124.1e, Micene; B91, Golan 2003, 132, Fig. 124.12, Sumer.

²⁷⁶ Boghian 1997.

²⁷⁷ Bodi 2010, Fig. 62-64.

²⁷⁸ Roska 1941, Fig. 97/16.

²⁷⁹ Unpublished, manuscript documentation Carol Germann and Fr. Resch.

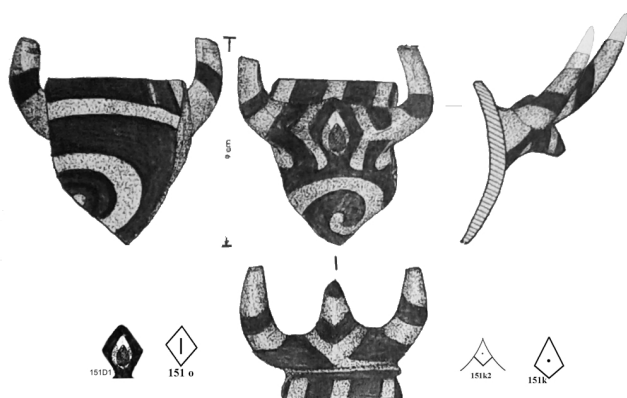


Fig. 114b. Hoișești-La Pod, Cucuteni A₃, protomes with bull head on the edge, apud Bodi 2010.

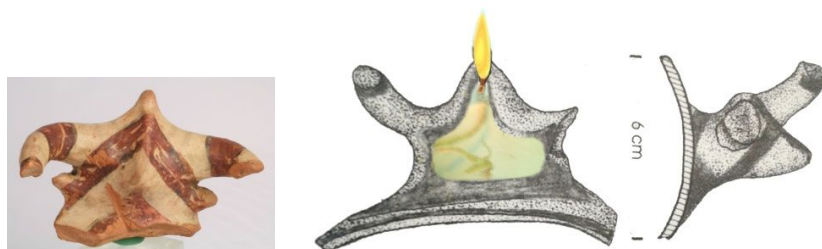


Fig. 114c. Hoișești-La Pod, Cucuteni A₃, protomes with bull head on the edge, apud Bodi 2010.

We must notice that one of the pieces in Hoișești (Fig. 114b) possesses a forehead decoration like a diamond, and inside it, a white drop with a black core. This is what the peasants consider to be the calves or foals with a star on the forehead.

Another piece from Hoișești has, between the edge of the vessel rim and the horns, a cavity in which, if we were to put oil, we might have a lamp, according to our opinion and our reconstruction (Fig. 114c). The form of

the vessels is different and the decoration belongs to the complex symbolic art, like in the



Fig. 115. Bowls with protomes, Cucuteni-Trypillia: a-b, Poienеști-Măgura Teilor²⁸⁰; c, Čercasiv Sad II; d, Cucuteni-Trypillia 2008, Hoișești; e, Soloceni II; fg, Sušivki (d, f, g, apud *Enticlopedia Tripolskoi* 2004, 74, 79).

²⁸⁰ Lazarovici C.-M. et al. 2009, cat. 69; Lazarovici C.-M., Babeș 2015: a, passim; b, Gr. 705, the cult, Fig. II.54.



case of
the Cucuteni -
Trypillia cultures.

The
decoration in Fig.
114b represents a
symbol (Fig.
115d1) with
analogies in the
Danube Script
(code 151o,
151k2, 151k).
These codes
appear on idols
and they are
symbols related to
sex or fertility and
fecundity, the

bucranium and the bull representing the strongest expression about these aspects, throughout the entire mythology of the Neolithic communities. Another interesting piece comes from Mitoc-Pârâul lui Istrati²⁸¹ where two smaller horns come out from the larger horns (Fig. 116a), suggesting the perpetuation of the bull force through time. Between the horns there is again placed the diamond, suggesting the sex or the belly, i.e. fecundity, the fruit. Belonging to the same theme, a vessel for storing provisions has a streak/belt made of bucrania (Fig. 116b), this vessel probably being used to store seeds or something else, but the point is that the role of the bucrania was to protect the contents. There exists also a special globular bowl with a protoma on its shoulder and also a small tail suggesting a fat animal with horns (Fig. 116d); its shape suggests that it might have served as a lamp or as a tallow container; the wide shape makes it stable, but the lack of its bottom part requires some consideration. Another piece seems to represent a bucranium of a ram, judging by its horns (Fig. 116c), and another one has a double bucranium (Fig. 116f), probably suggesting the earthly

bull and the celestial one, which is not surprising for the Cucuteni culture, where symbols and abstraction of ideas are often present in the mythology of the symbols from this civilization.

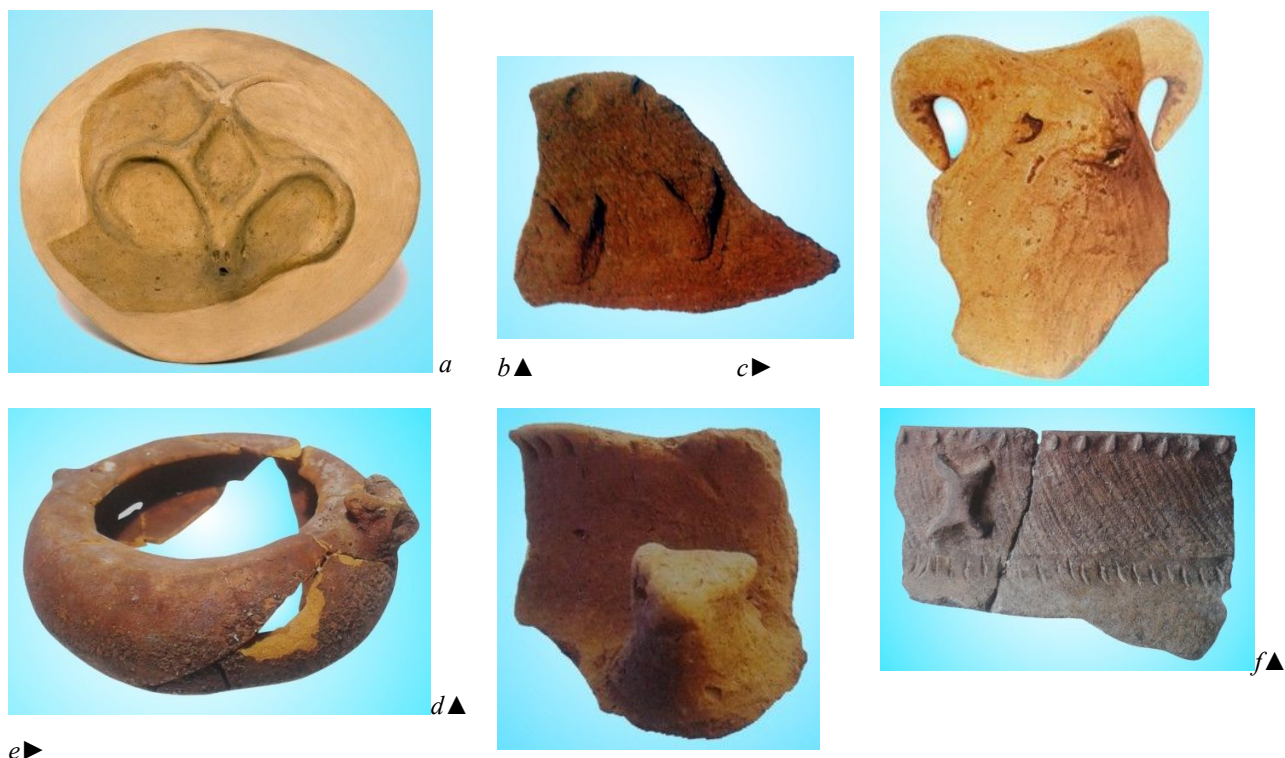


Fig. 116. Cucuteni – Trypillia culture, protomes on vessels: a, Mitoc - Pârâul lui Istrati, apud Diaconescu 2016; b, Hvoiki collection, apud *Enticlopedia Tripolskoi* 2004, vol. II; c, apud Mareş 2009; d-e, s.v. Maidaneţ, apud *Enticlopedia Tripolskoi* 2004, Vol. II; f, Luka Vrublevetksaja, apud Burdo 2010.

From the settlement of Bereşti-Dealul Bulgarului we have two pieces (Fig. 117a-b), more or less stylized, in which some elements belonging to the head are suggested with artistic force/talent, having details for the eyes, nostrils, mouth; sometimes, even the ears are drawn (Fig. 117.b).

²⁸¹ Diaconescu 2016, manuscript.

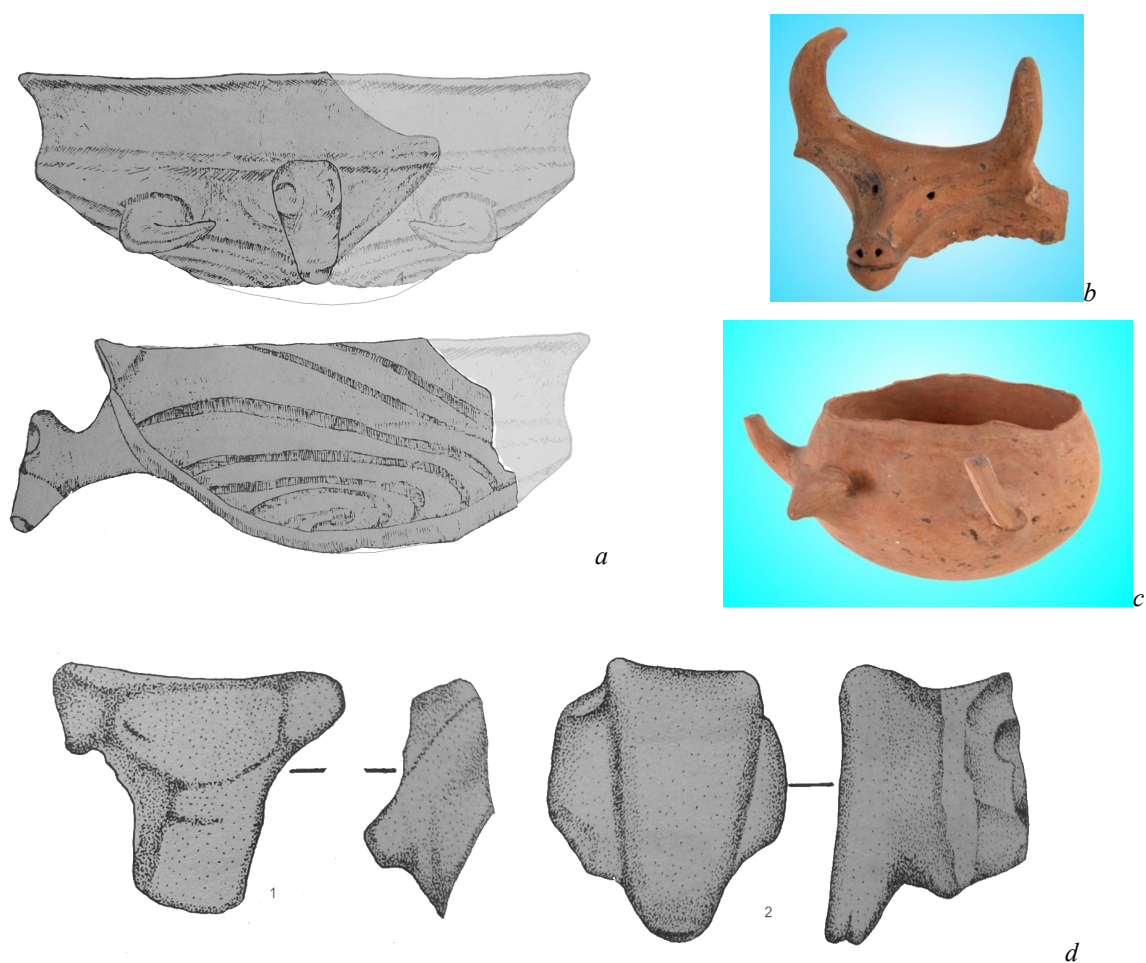


Fig. 117. the Cucuteni culture, A₃: a- d, Berești-Dealul Bulgarului; a, d, apud Dragomir 1996, 54, fig. 27.1.2; c, the collection of The Museum of History in Galați.

The theme of the protomes can be met also in other adjacent/neighboring civilizations, the horns being depicted with the same artistic force. In the Gumelnița culture, as we have underlined, there are some anthropomorphic vessels which, instead of the handles, have a horn or a phallus head (Fig. xx), both suggesting the idea of fecundity.

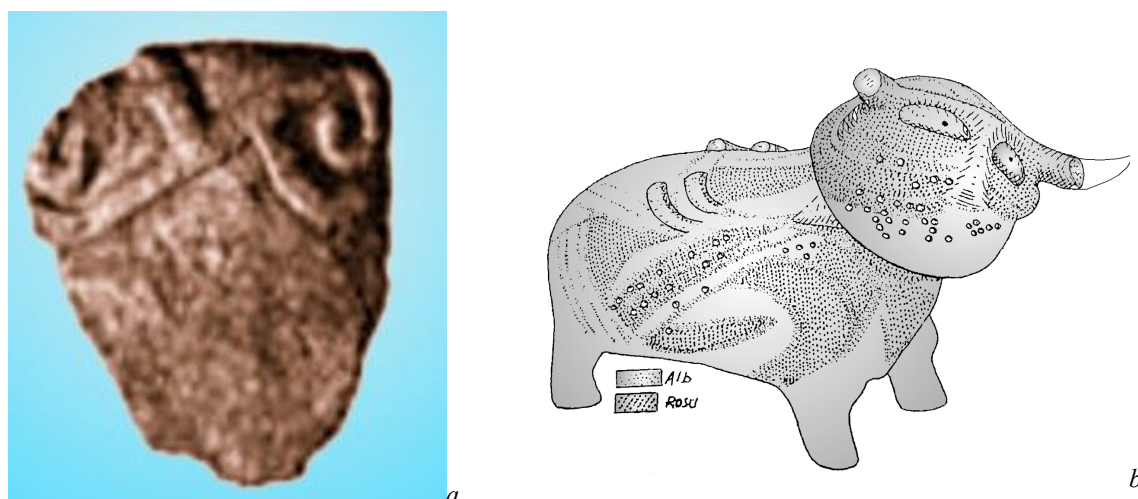


Fig. 118. Vessels and taps with horns from Cucuteni and Gumelnița: a, Ruginoasa (apud H. Dumitrescu 1933); c, Goljamo-Izvor, apud Andreescu 2002, pl. 62.2.

From the South of the Danube River, from Goljamo-Izvor, there was found a zoomorphic vessel whose tap has the shape of a bucranium with horns. The decoration painted in red and white is suggesting purity, light, the red being used for the heat, love, therefore, the bucranium is the element channeling the above ideas towards fecundity (Fig. 118).

In the culture of the linear pottery from the Central and Western Europe, there are a few cases of vessels with bucranium that give a zoomorphic appearance to the vessels from Straubing (Fig. 119b), Hienheim (Fig. 119), Puchov (Fig. 119c-d) and maybe Zauschwitz²⁸².



Fig. 118c, Gumelnița-Măgura.

In the culture of the linear pottery from the Central and Western Europe, there are a few cases of vessels with bucranium that give a zoomorphic appearance to the vessels from Straubing (Fig. 119b), Hienheim (Fig. 119), Puchov (Fig. 119c-d) and maybe Zauschwitz²⁸³.

The artistic force rendered by these vessels is no less exquisite

²⁸² Müller-Karpe 1968, Taf. 223.12, 20; Gimbutas 1989, 267, Fig. 414.2, Hienheim.

²⁸³ Müller-Karpe 1968, Taf. 223.12, 20; Gimbutas 1989, 267, Fig. 414.2, Hienheim.

than the one from the Cucuteni culture, with the difference that the idols and vessels with protomes are less common or maybe our

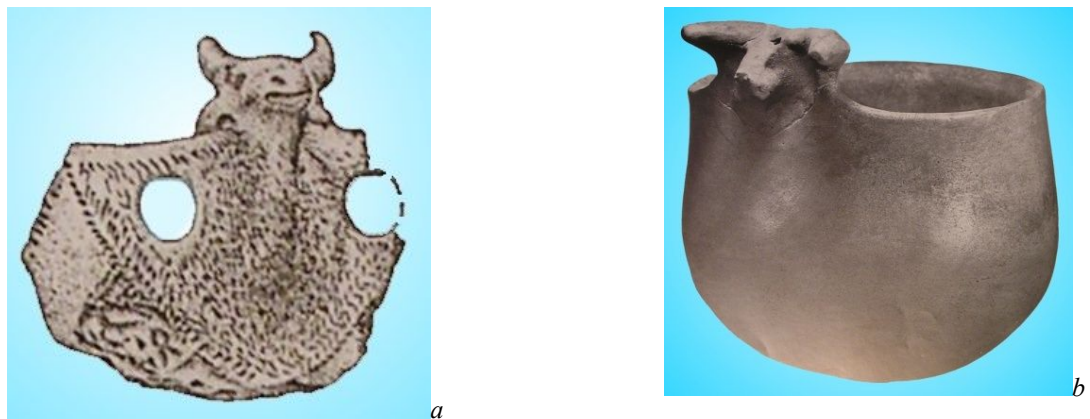
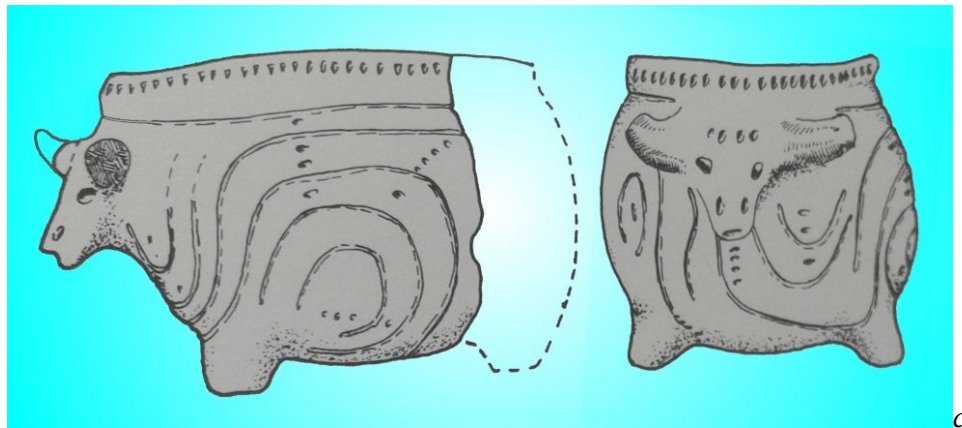


Fig. 119. Zoomorphic vessels with protomes as a bull bucranium: a, Puchiv; b, Straubing; c, Hienheim, apud Müller-Karpe and Gimbutas.



information is incomplete. But we have to specify that also later on, during the era of metals (Copper, Bronze, Hallstatt), in the Minoan and Mycenaean civilizations, the Iapygian art and others, as we have seen also above, the bucranium and the bull had played an important role for the mythology and its reflections in art (Fig. 120).

The main theme of the Iapygian art²⁸⁴ is the handle with the horns, which often has on it the eyes and sometimes the nostrils of the bull, suggesting the bucranium (Fig. 120.2-4). The horns are either sharp (Fig. 120.1) or cut (they are placed/sitting on a painted column, Fig. 120.6), having a cross between the horns, with differences for the right and the left horn, between them being placed the Venus mount of sex (Fig. 120.6), which emphasizes the symbols of fecundity. On the edges of the vessels there are other protomes suggesting nocturnal animals or birds (mouse or bat ears, Fig.

²⁸⁴ Chamay, Courtois 2002, 41ff., cat. 3-7, 15 etc.

120.2-4), strengthening the idea of fecundity and nightly sexuality. It is very likely that these unknown artists, resembling the ones of the Cucuteni culture, had been transferring into art those various myths that were circulating during the prehistoric times, myths that should not be overlooked too easily.



Fig. 120. Vessels with symbols, bucrania protomes, horns from the art of the Iapygians.

The representation of the bucranium through painting, in Iraq (Fig. 121.a)²⁸⁵, in Syria (Fig. 121.b)²⁸⁶, in the late Halaf culture, in Matera ²⁸⁷ (Fig. 121, in Central Mediterranean) or in Central Europe (Fig. 121), until the Copper Age, in the Trypillia culture (Fig. 121.d)²⁸⁸ or the Early Cycladic (Fig. 121.e)²⁸⁹, had been associated with abstract concepts (suggesting the seasons or the cardinal points when there are four pieces). The bucranium is on the column, on the vessels, associated with the sun or the moon, with vertical or horizontal stripes, in a cluster, it fills the empty spaces on the chessboard, sometimes two bulls painted on a red vessel are suggesting the astral phenomena of the evening, as those from the Trypillia culture (Fig. 121.d), foreboding the storm, aspects that remind

²⁸⁵ sMüller-Karpe 1968, Taf. 67.

²⁸⁶ Müller-Karpe 1968, Taf. 66; Jaritz 1970, Fig 146.

²⁸⁷ Matera Italy, Müller-Karpe 1968, Taf. 252C, 2-3.

²⁸⁸ The Celestial Bulls, ****Enticlopedia Tripolskoi* 2004, vol. II, 417, the Platar collection.

us of Mircea Eliade's opinion concerning the bull, the lightning-horn, the thunder-bluster etc. Each Bull has above its horns a Red Sky, foreboding the storm.

The bull bucrania painted on chariots, from Iraq and Syria, are true ornamental motifs in the most varied combinations. Sometimes the horns are represented in a shaky line above the triangle suggesting the bucranium (Fig. 121.b25, 26, 29) and reminding about the horns in Çatal Höyük (Fig. 5c).

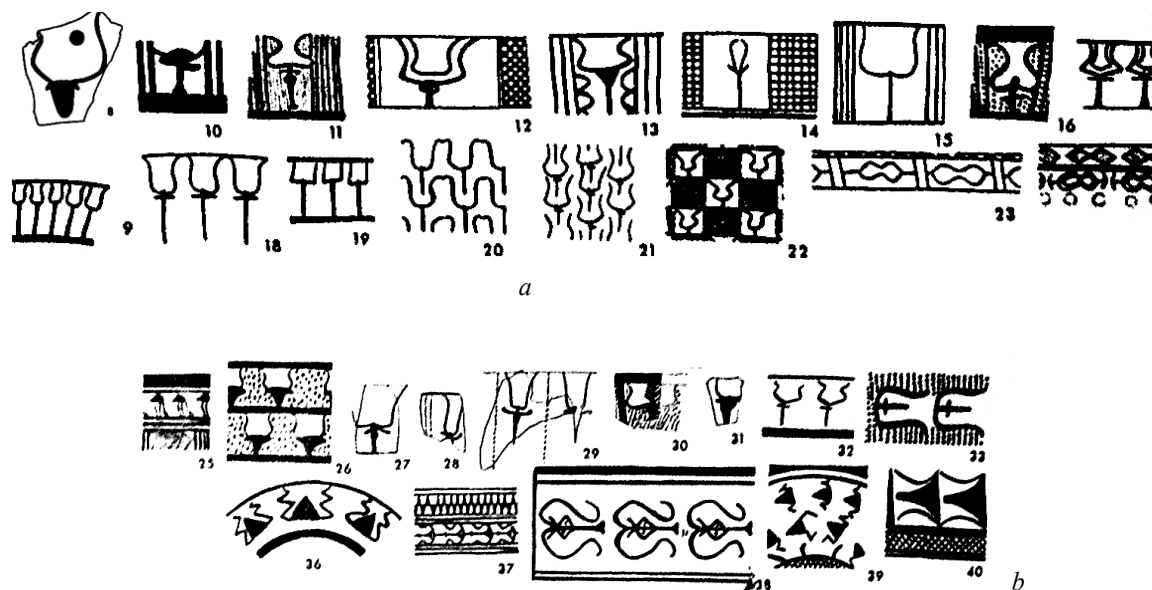


Fig. 121. Symbols with painted, incised or embossed bucrania on vessels: a, Iraq; b, Syria; c, Trypillia, the Platar collection; c, Bendorf; d, Cyclades (Gimbutas 1989, fig. 412).

The vessel with the incised bucrania from Bendorf (Fig. 121.d)²⁹⁰ is sending to the combination of the double axe and the double small altar with horns (see above Fig. 9a and others).

²⁸⁹ Gimbutas 1989, 266 Fig. 412, the Early Cycladic.

²⁹⁰ Müller-Karpe 1968, Taf. 226.14.

Another vessel with a stylized anthropomorphic representation, from the Early Cycladic²⁹¹, depicting the Great Mother with the hands on her breasts, an image often encountered in the Neolithic art, starting from the earliest Neolithic horizons, in Anatolia²⁹², is showing a bucranium at the bottom of the vessel, where the womb would be, both of them being symbols of fecundity and fertility.

Symbols referring to bucrania, devotion horns, the horn of plenty and their associations

In this study we have also analyzed some situations where the pieces were not monumental, but the arguments had been given according to their place, position and the meaning of the respective subthemes that were passing from symbol to sign.

The fact that on the clay models/replicas of the sanctuaries can be found symbols similar to those on the monumental sanctuaries underlines the idea of a well-defined cult, full of significations. In our catalogues we have many signs and symbols related to the bucranium, devotion horns, horns and others connected with the theme. Of course, it was not the case here to mention other signs they are associate with, but only occasionally, in order to emphasize the messages conveyed by signs or symbols. In some situations, we have presented the analogies of some symbols from our catalogues with signs. While studying the objects above, it resulted the need to codify also the symbols, a task even more difficult, due to the fact that through their variables, the symbols convey different messages, and sometimes the sign is representing an abstraction. Some might be familiar totems (e.g. 31, B14, B30, B33 etc.), sometimes they are linked to the rituals from the sanctuaries, by the association with the column (the symbol for the link with the divinity, B26, B27, 284, 284a, B34, B17, B24j, B24k). For other cases above, we have presented the analogies and comments.

Sometimes, the associations between these symbols offer us the possibility of a more precise understanding regarding the role of the symbol, e.g. code 281.1 (from the Buzău Mountains), an altar with three legs and horns and the Sun above, rendering the idea of a solar altar.

Some symbols with bucrania are having a sign value, as in the case of the Tărtăria tablets that were part of the inventory of a priestess and they were connected to the rituals learnt by heart, which had to be respected/applied precisely while killing the bull²⁹³. This bucranium had been

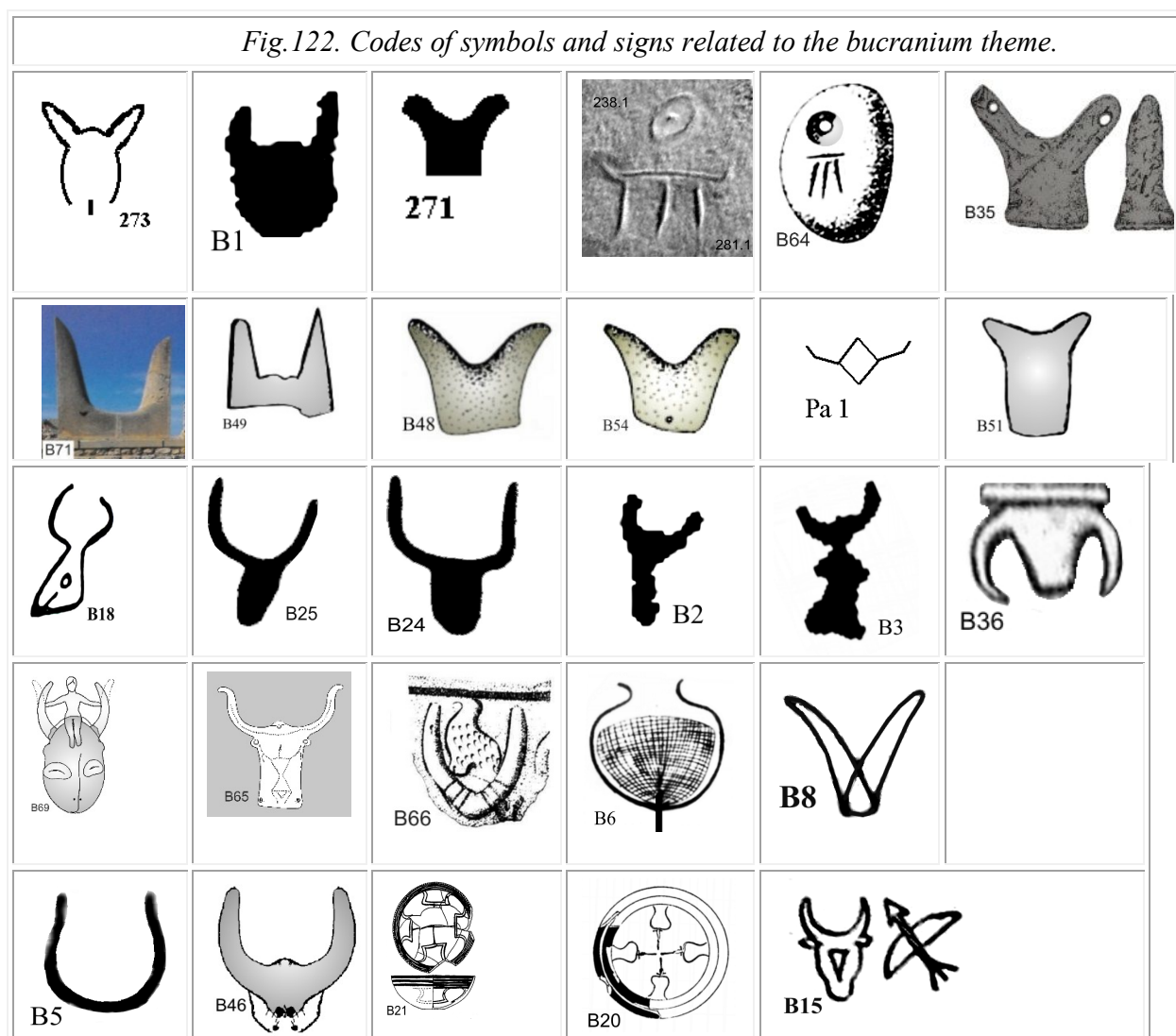
²⁹¹ Gimbutas 1989, 266 Fig. 412c.

²⁹² Hansen 2007.2, Taf. 57.11 61.1-2, 62.1-2, 63.2, 67, 68.4, 70.4+5, 74.1 etc.

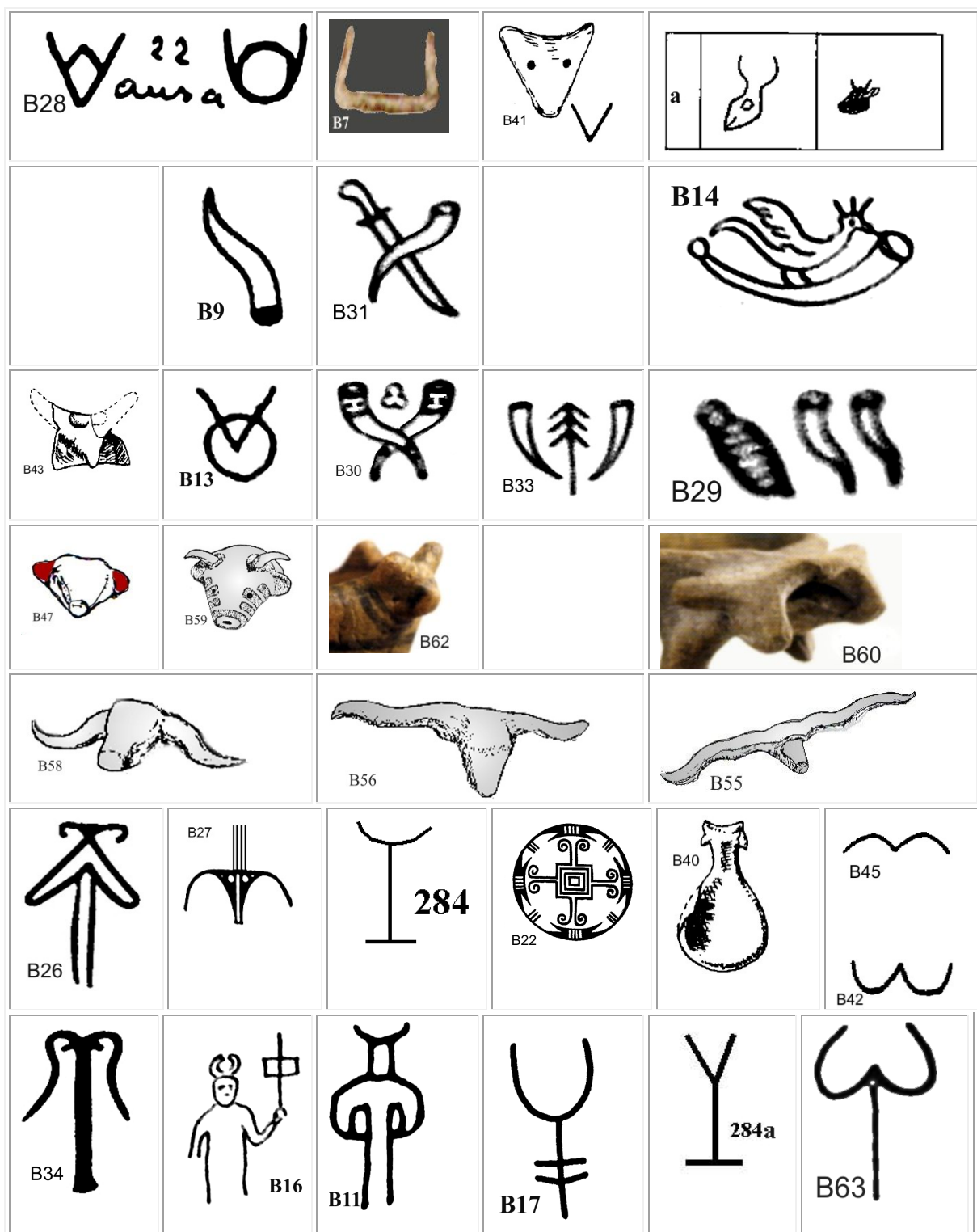
²⁹³ Vlassa 1962; 1963; 1976, Fig. 7/3=8/3 associated with ATU 41; Lazarovici Gh. et alii 2011: the rectangular tablet, code no. 9.

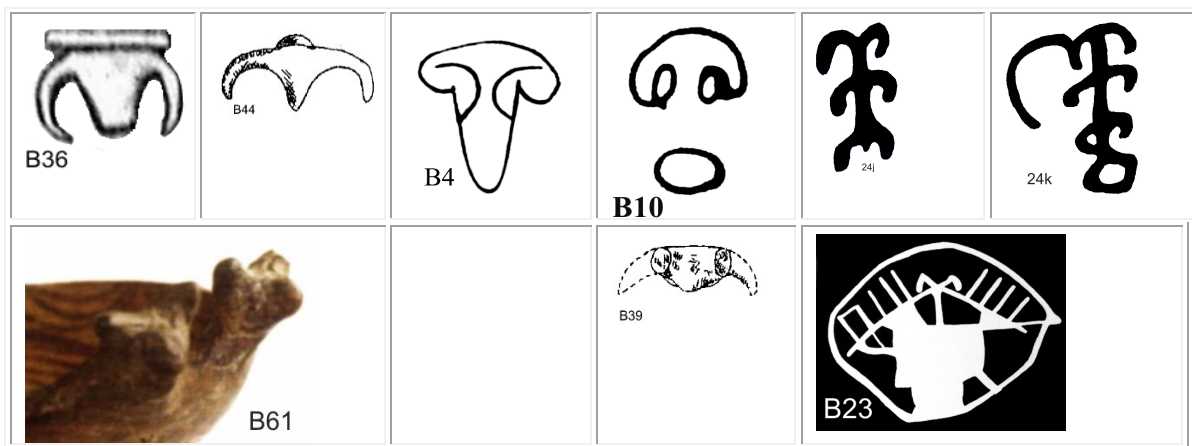
associated with different codes (ATU 41, our code 243 etc., see Fig. 44-48): significant is to notice its usage in various forms of writing or in alphabets having clear meanings that could have been understood, and sometimes be decoded. But the symbol has to be understood in the broader sense, often depending on the context, materials, associations and more. However, we are not going to discuss this issue here.

We have completed the database about signs with the one about symbols, in order to be able to identify the transmission over time of the symbols, as a means of communication, information and, more recently, regulation²⁹⁴.



²⁹⁴ In chemistry, physics, mathematics, traffic, masonry and others, the symbols are playing various roles.














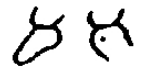

Their knowledge, but especially their association, when combining them, enables us to identify the names (of the letters... alpha, beta, gamma delta, ..., of the constellations and many others), meanings, ideas, and expressions. Combination, tones, colors are playing an important role in communication. Unlike words, the symbols have a wider sense, even though the words themselves possess different meanings (homonyms, synonyms, antonyms, etc.).




Below (Fig. 123), we have shown the relation between the early alphabets and the **DS**. The simplification of this sign (the bucranium) looks like a column with horns. Of course, there can be found much more correspondences, some being presented by the groups of pieces above. Many of these symbols, signs, end up as parts of some alphabets, sometimes being related to the starting point of some letter, which represents the best symbol, the most frequent one, the most encountered in the myths or in the current speech (see below, the bucranium with its meaning in the Hebrew language for the *aleph* = cattle, or other cases found in the spelling books for children, taught in school). Some of our colleagues analyzed them or they had been included in books, synthesis papers, popular works connected with the "story of writing" or of the alphabets, treaties about writing and the languages (Fig. 123, 125)²⁹⁵, many researchers comparing them to the **Danubian Script** (Fig. 124- abbreviated DS or SD²⁹⁶).

²⁹⁵ *** *Der Turmbau zu Babel* 2003.

²⁹⁶ Haarmann 1995; 2008a; 2008b; 2009; 2009°; Merlini 2004; 2005; 2008; 2009 etc.

Fig. 21	Sinai 1500 î. Hr.	Canaan 1000 î. Hr.	Fenicia 750 î. Hr.	Grecia	Europa azi
Cap de bou					A
Arc					S

<i>Hieroglife egiptene</i>	<i>scrierea de pe Sinai</i>	<i>Scriterea semită veche</i>	<i>Numele literei în ebraică</i>
			āleph (vită)

Spom. Kr. Meše	Karan.	Tartar.	Vinča	Tordoș
				





 1e1
 1e
 45


Fig. 123. Bucranium with synonym meanings in various alphabets.






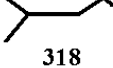


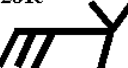







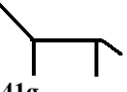



a) Segni pittografici/deografici che raffigurano animali.		b) Segni pittografici/deografici che raffigurano esseri umani o parti del corpo			
Segno Old European	n. di riferimento	Segno Old European	n. di riferimento		
	OE 1		OE 7		273
	OE 2		OE 8		318
	OE 3		OE 9		281e
	OE 4		OE 10		281d
	OE 5				281a
	OE 6				
					341b
					341g
					341a
					341
					49

Fig. 124. Some correspondences between the Old European/Danube Script and our codes, apud Haarmann 2008a; 2008b.




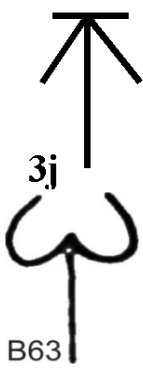









n°	Wert	Hieroglyphenschrift			Linear
		H	A	B	
16	mu				
17	BOS				
18	CAP.				
19	ru				

Fig. 125. Significance of the bucranium in ancient alphabets.

ÇATAL HÖYÜK. SANCTUARY E6.10 (FIG. 126A-C)

In a wider study of the "*Danubian Script*" in which we have analyzed the association between signs and the objects they appear on, we concluded again that most of the signs had been placed on the cult objects²⁹⁷. Actually, we continued what our colleagues have done previously, their names representing a large number in fact, the most recent and monumental works being gathered, ordered, classified, analyzed, starting with J. Makkay²⁹⁸, S. Winn²⁹⁹, M. Gimbutas³⁰⁰, M. Merlini³⁰¹, H. Haarmann, Joan Marler³⁰² and others³⁰³, being included also some synthesis about writings and languages³⁰⁴.

²⁹⁷ Lazarovici Gh. 2003; 2004; 2009a; 2009b.

²⁹⁸ Makkay 1969; 1971; 1990; Tulokk, Makkay 1999.

²⁹⁹ Winn 1973; 1981; 1990; 2004a; 2004b; Winn S. M., <http://www.prehistory.it/ftp/winn.htm>

³⁰⁰ Gimbutas 1989.

³⁰¹ Merlini 2004; 2004a; 2005; 2005a; 2006; 2007; 2008; 2009; 2010 etc.

³⁰² Haarmann, Marler 2008; Haarmann 1995; 2008a; 2008b; 2009; 2009a.

³⁰³ Torma 1894; 1897; Todorova, Vaisov 1993, 229-230; Maxim et alii 2009; Trbuhovic, Vasiljević 1983; etc.

³⁰⁴ *Schrift, Sprache...* 2002; *** *Der Turmbau zu Babel* 2003.



Fig. 126a. Çatal Höyük, "The Mythical Ancestor", sanctuary E VI.10, apud Mellart 1983, 55, cat. A50.



Fig. 126b. Çatal Höyük, "The Mythical Ancestor", sanctuary E VI.10, apud Mellart 1983.



Fig. 126c. Çatal Höyük, ("The Mythical Ancestor", sanctuary E VI.10), the correspondences for signs and symbols in the **DS**.

Some international symposia have been organized lately on these topics³⁰⁵.

The basic idea is that the *Danubian Script* is a sacred writing, using signs and symbols in order to memorize, apply and convey certain rules, lessons, being possible to include here even a religious liturgical character (*leitourgia*, gr. = work). We must keep in mind that some cults are obeying certain canons, like the cult of the bucranium in which there are taken/borrowed from the bull, through the bucranium, only the insignias/features useful for the evocation of the bull qualities and attributes. Many of these myths are recorded by the symbols or associations of signs and symbols.

Of course, there exist several signs and symbols, and also ligatures, but we have selected only some that we have met more often (Fig. 126a) or which we have analyzed. Under the right

³⁰⁵ ****Early Symbolic Systems...* 2003 organized by L. Nikolova; some others, organized by J. Marler, M. Merlini, Gh. Lazarovici; C.-M. Lazarovici, S. A. Luca, Z. Maxim: *** *Sings of Civilization* 2004; ****The Danube Script* 2008; *** *The Danube Script in the Light of the Turdaş and Tărtăria discoveries* 2009; *** *From Symbol to Sings* 2015 et al.

hand we may find the bucranium (DS 256) and other combinations (DS b18, 1aac, 229i, 229k). There are also other signs and symbols, but we chose the ones with minimum ligatures.

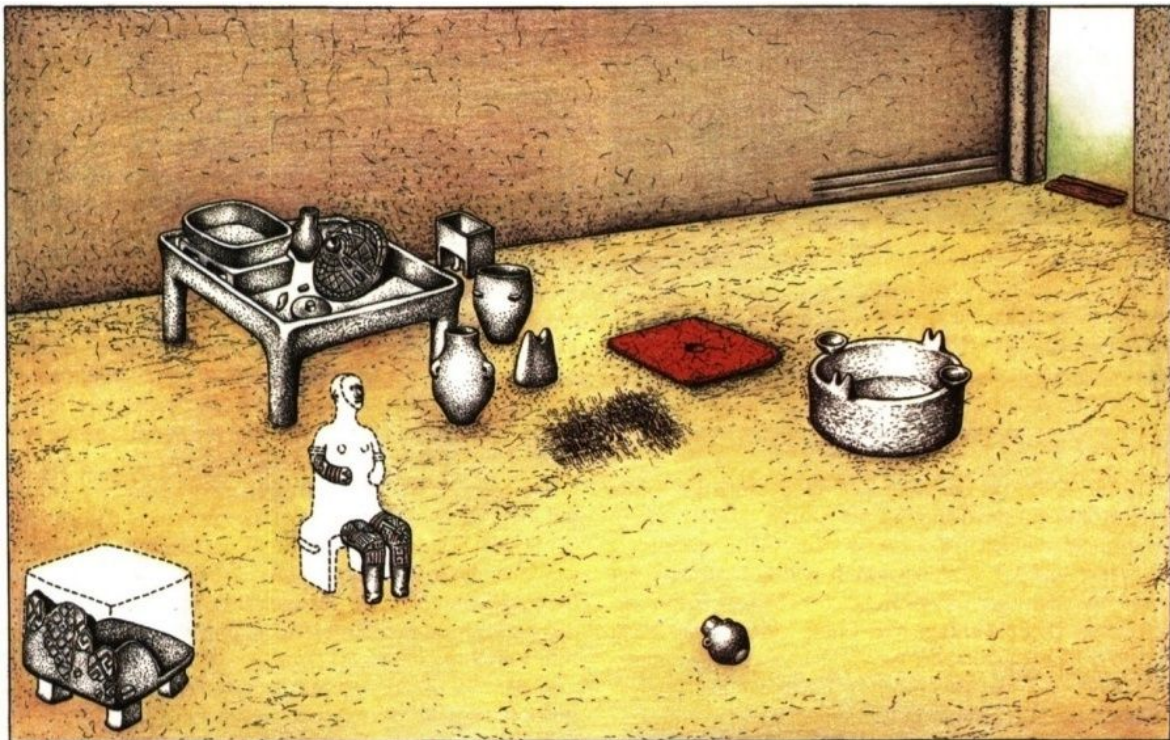


Fig. 127. *Vestö – Magór, the Tisa culture, apud Hegedüs, Makkay 1987.*

We also may note, in the case of this Mythical Ancestor, that the face, the hands and the legs had been destroyed, but the womb had not been touched; we have raised this issue also in the case of the ritual breaking of the inventory belonging to the *Lady of Tărtăria*³⁰⁶, where the objects and attributes connected with the idea of procreation had been protected. The mythical ancestor also appears in the case of some other altars (Fig. 5.1-2).

³⁰⁶ Lazarovici Gh. et alii 2001, 103, Tărtăria at the death of the priestess named *Lady of Tărtăria*; Lazarovici Gh. et al. 2011, 136-150; especially Merlini has developed the topic of the ritual breaking.

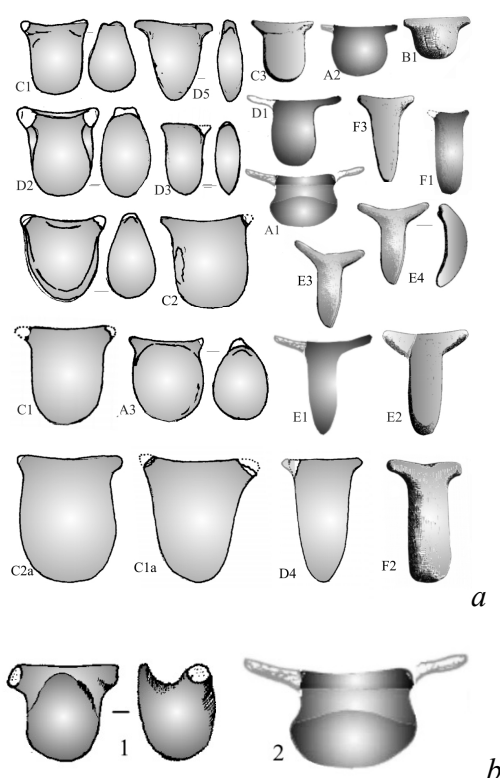


Fig. 128. Typology Gh. Lazarovici: a, bucrania, amulets; b, bucrania-fishing rods.

The idea that emerges from here is that the signs, being from a sanctuary, are including a cultic narrative, but, of course, for the skeptics it is a simple decoration. The ones with ligatures are much more interesting because they may express more, but it is not necessary to develop this issue here.

The presence of the bucranium, the main theme in the sanctuaries and on the community or domestic altars from Çatal Höyük, may also be found in the mythological narrative on the wall of the community sanctuary (sanctuary E VI.10). Also in the case of other sanctuaries, like the one in Vestö-Magór belonging to the Tisa culture (Fig. 127), the bucranium appears on the edges of a cultic vessel or as a monumental piece, often counted automatically as being “cloves hearth”.

Amulets, labrets and/or fishing hooks

They have been considered amulets due to their small size and shape.

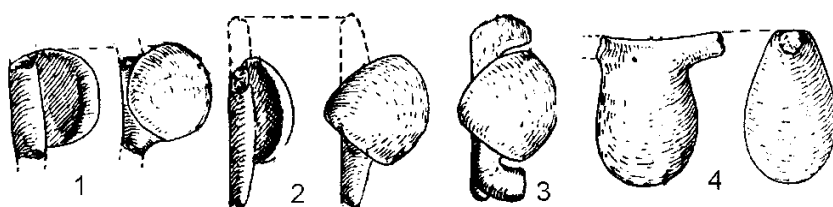


Fig. 129. Bucranium fishing rods selected by us, Dubova and other sites. From them had generated a series of shapes, which determined us to consider them as being fishing hooks (Fig. 128b, 129)³⁰⁷. A typology and synthesis on them were made by McPheron, Srejović (1988)³⁰⁸, Sabin Luca (2004)³⁰⁹,

They have the form of a stylized bucranium, some are decorated, a reason to consider them amulets.

³⁰⁷ The principle guide for usage is similar: by the help of animal guts/intestines tied to a string, they can be used as bird traps with seeds. Lazarovici Gh. 2006, 127 and in the *Banat Prehistory*, Vol. 2, manuscript.

³⁰⁸ McPheron, Srejović 1988, 325 ff., 11.1 t.

³⁰⁹ Luca 2004, the typology and the catalogue of pieces.

Stanković³¹⁰; we have also made a cultural series (2006, Fig. 10a)³¹¹; on his turn, N. Kalicz (2000) had presented a spreading map³¹², but others have studied them, too³¹³.

Serghei Karmanski published a large number of pieces³¹⁴. He considers them labrets, but we doubt such functionality, considering them amulets, some being used as fishing rods (Fig. 128b, 129). We should analyze if in the settlements belonging to the same period of time, having no big rivers or rivers forming natural lakes, there existed such pieces. For example, they are missing in Gura Baciului, but they appear in other locations of the same time, and also later, on the Danube, in Moldova Veche, in a settlement belonging to the Starčevo-Criș IVA phase, being the last example from this culture³¹⁵.

Their shape reminds us of other representations of the bucranium, although in the Early Neolithic the stylization loses the bucranium shape, reaching the *nail type*, as occurs in Gura Baciului, sometimes similar to the column or the phallus³¹⁶.

Bucranium of the bull, stag and others in the cave art

The bull is being represented in the cave art from immemorial times. Some images can be dated, others not, but according to the depiction techniques or by the association with certain sites, we can ascertain sometimes the incredible age of the myths represented in the cave art.



³¹⁰ Stanković 1983.

³¹¹ Some types are missing: Lazarovici Gh. 2006, 127 the bibliography, 128 the series, 150 the typology.

³¹² Kalicz 2000, Fig. 8.

³¹³ We have over 80 recordings in our database: Drașovean 2001, Fig. 40.5; Aslanis 1992, Fig. 8B/1-3; Korkuti 1995, 15-16; Čohadiev St. 2001, 175, Fig. 35.2, 93.1; Nikolić, Zečević 2001, 4.

³¹⁴ Karmanski 1979, pl. XLVIII; 1988, pl. I/8, 10, pl. III/4.

³¹⁵ Unpublished piece from the Museum in Reșița, digging by Gh. Lazarovici and Dumitru Țeicu.

³¹⁶ Dikaos - Stewart apud Müller-Karpe 1974, III, Kat. 115, pl. 343/4-5; Karageorgihs 1977, 34, 41-42, Fig. 13a; Stanković 1992, pl. XXXIX.1, 5, 12.

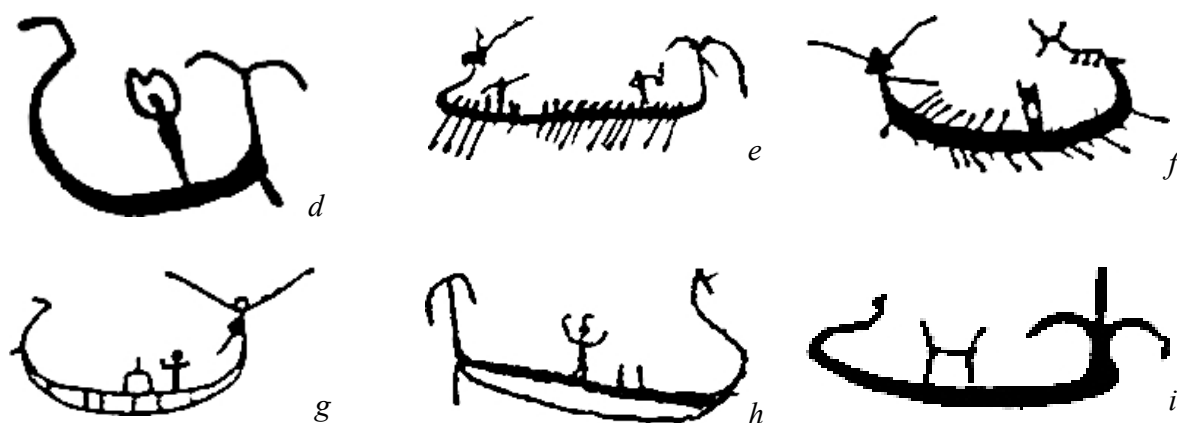


Fig. 130. The Upper Egypt, cave drawings/rupestrian representations, apud Müller-Karpe 1968, Taf. 312.

In the cave art, the bull often appears associated with the horned snake. It is about the mixing of the two qualities of the two species. On some small boats depicted through painting and incisions, the bucranium appears at one end of the boat, on the bow or the stern (Fig. 130a), while the horned snake³¹⁷ is placed on the other end (Fig. 130. b-c, g-i). Often, inside the boat there are banners with a bucranium (Fig. 130. b). Other times, there may be a stag head, taken after the horns (Fig. 130.3). Some of them symbolize the souls floating on the river *Styx* (the name of the daughter of *Oceanus*, the god of the oceans, and *Tethys*, the granddaughter of *Tethys*, the titan) to the underworld, as it is in the Greek mythology, accompanied by the bull, the stag and the snake.

Bucranium as a mask

Even from the Paleolithic art, the bull (*bos primigenius*), the bison and other large animals, such as the stag, the roebuck, the elephant and others, have played an important role in providing the things necessary for living, the people of those times including them in their artistic mythology, invoking the divine forces, the divinities of those animals in their daily lives. The caves, the entrances of the caves and the rocks have served as a support for the cave sanctuaries or the ones from the vestibule of a cave, for the ones on the cliffs, the nature sanctuaries, all these lasting throughout time as places with sacred energy. Usually, these rupestrian representations, the parietal art, are hard to be dated in time, this being possible only when they overlap in time or when some other tools used for incision are being involved. However, in the nature sanctuaries, as is the case of the Valca Monica one (sometimes called Capo di Ponte Valcamonica or Camonica ...), the representation technology is being preserved over several historical eras. Alongside with the

³¹⁷ An extensive study of the snake: Lazarovici C.-M., Lazarovici Gh. 2015, 69 ff., 90-91.

animals, some symbols appear, which are abstracting or generalizing the animal idea, in particular the horned animals, where the horn, the bucranium is replacing the image of the animal or is reinforcing it, evoking the animal spirit. The horns become attributes that define characters, masks, and through a continuous simplification they become a sign, having a wide or a narrow generalization degree, according to each case. These symbols, myths, characters, mask used daily or in cult rituals are being transmitted to the following historical eras, some being encountered even nowadays (the festivals with masks, feasts with masks, events with masks) in which the character wears or evokes the attributes of the mask.

The shamans, sorcerers or hunters, during some ritual dances in which they were invoking the goodwill of the divinities, of the spirits from the animal world, especially the horned animals, in the case of our analysis, were disguised or they wore a mask imitating the animal. This is the case with some depictions of masked sorcerers, some famous ones (Fig. 131.a) and another situation in which the upper part of a woman body is represented by a great mask of a bull bucranium from the Chauvet Cave³¹⁸ (Fig. 131.b). In another representation, a sorcerer or a shaman was wearing a bull skin, including also the bull head, which was reaching up to his knee (Fig. 131.c)³¹⁹.



³¹⁸ Anati 1961, Fig. 176.

³¹⁹ Anati 1961: a, Fig. 181; b, Fig. 176, the Chauvet Cave; c), Anati 1961; Le Gabillou, Fig. 180; Otte 2011.

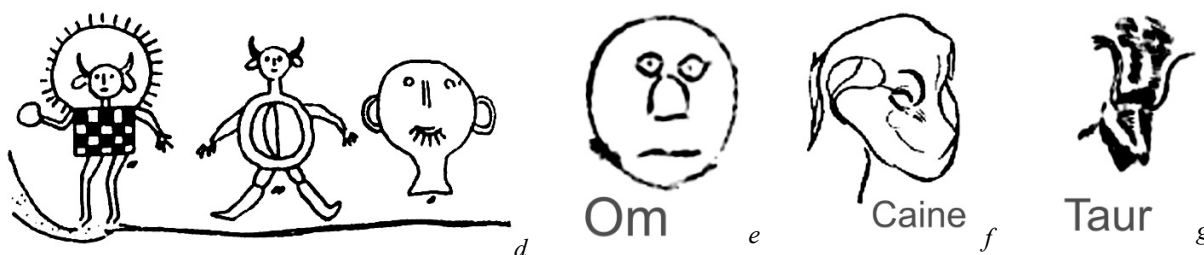
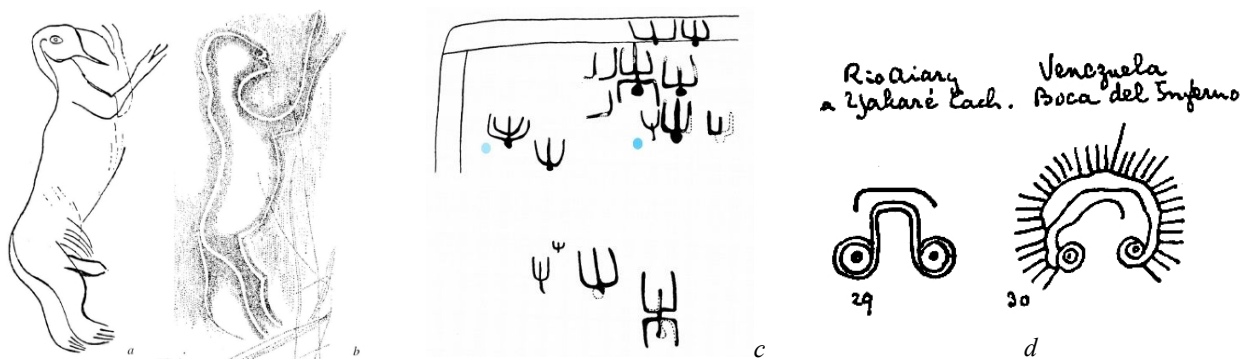


Fig. 131. Characters disguised as animals or masks: a, the sorcerer (apud Anati 1961, Fig. 181; Otte 2011); b, the Chauvet Cave, the bison-woman, the upper part of the body; c, Le Gabillou, Dordogne; d, apud Wirth 1931, 72 A3, personifications of Sun, Moon, man; e-g, Trois Frères, human and animal masks (apud Anati 1961, Fig. 181; Otte 2011).

In the cases of another three characters, illustrated by H. Wirth (Fig. 131.d), the Sun is represented with a head having a halo and horns, the body in the form of a chessboard with 20 squares in black and white, the Moon like a round womb and a man head whose mouth possesses sun beams (Fig. 131.d³²⁰). Actually, these may represent the birth of the sun, moon and man by the astral divinities with horns.

Bucranium, horn, column, bucranium in calendars

Regarding the male characters wearing masks, having the head or the beak of a bird (*le bec d'oiseau*), being part of the images with ritual dance (Fig. 132. a-c), like "the wedding" (*mariage*) or other processions (Fig. 132. s, g), sometimes there appear only the bucranium or the horns (Fig. 131 c, g, our marking in blue). Some special/peculiar stylization is encountered in Fig. 132.d 29 and 30, from Risairari and from Venezuela, where the horns are dominating "the entrance of inferno/hell".



³²⁰ Wirth 1931, 72.A3.



Fig. 132. Representations, stylized bucrania, human figures with horns, stylized horns.

On the Teasc Mountain, from the Eastern Carpathians, where we have signalized a sanctuary in nature³²¹, having many rocks with signs and symbols, once considered to be some Szekler runes³²², several signs have been reassessed and considered to be neolithic³²³; on one of the rocks (rock 5, unpublished signs) appears the bucranium and other signs and dots (Fig. 132.f). Also on them, we notice a bucranium made by the impact with a sharp object.

This technique often occurs when analyzing the signs and symbols from Valca Monica, but also in Syria³²⁴, starting from the Epipaleolithic until the Iron Age.

³²¹ Lazarovici Gh. et al. 2011a; Lazarovici Gh., Lazarovici C.-M. 2014; Lazarovici C.-M., Lazarovici Gh. 2015.

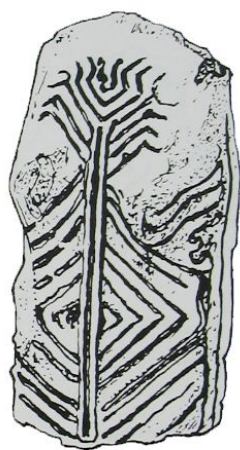
³²² Kovács I. 1914.

³²³ Bakó 1962; 1968.

³²⁴ Van Berg P. L., Osama al-Mechrif Hemma, Rapport préliminaire [http; Rock art and archaeology in Syria, http://www.rupestre.net/tracce/?p=3826](http://www.rupestre.net/tracce/?p=3826)



a



6

b



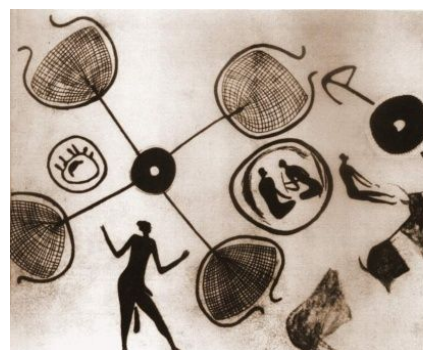
c

Fig. 144 - Kabn-l Melikan. Figura di un animale fantastico, probabilmente un bisonte, con divisione in settori all'interno

Fig. 133. Bucrania and horns: a, Spain; b, Cataj (Hansen 2007.2, Taf. 527.6); c, Kabn-l Melikan, bison above the bucrania, type E2; d, Arizona, Amerindian symbols; e, Tassili.



d



e

In Fig. 133a we have a human figure with bull horns, from the rupestrian art, associated with a sword, indicating a certain protohistoric stage; at the feet of the figure there are several symbols, among which a sort of bucranium with ears, and 7 circles on the edges (among them, one is having a tail which reminds us of some "palettes" from Valca Monica) and one square. The depiction placed at the feet could represent a war chariot pulled by two animals. If this is the case, we might have the representation of some personality, of a fighter, most likely a commander, because not every fighter would have had a chariot and a helmet with horns.

Human figures or a stylization of a sacred tree or of a woman (if we were to take it after the diamond-shaped belly), whose peak or branches or hair (having the form of snakes, like in the case of Medusa the Gorgon) have endings with stylized horns or bucranium (Fig. 133b³²⁵). On a cliff in Arizona, members of an Amerindian community have rendered, in addition to various other

representations, a stylized figure in sitting position, having several horns or a helmet with plumes. On the left side, there appears another figure that has a series of other symbols above the head.



Fig. 134. The Pasiega Cave, Northern Spain, Magdalenian.

Bucranium and the snake (Fig. 134)

A picture from the Magdalenian, from Northern Spain (Fig. 134), is also considered to be the representation of a snake with horns, even if the position may suggest a human figure, too. However, the theme of the snake with horns is quite frequent in the symbolic representations³²⁶.

Bucranium and the column

We noticed also above numerous situations in which the bucranium is associated with the column (Fig. 9-14), the same situation being present in the rupestrian art, with the representations of bucrania on the column (Fig. 135a), with the depiction of several details for the eye and other symbols found on vessels with a human face (Fig. 135c, code DS 314; human 7, human 34³²⁷) or groups of three to six bucrania reminding of the bucrania from Çatal Höyük, placed on the column (Fig. 5a.2 above) or on the edge of the altars (Fig. 5a.4).



Fig. 135. a-b, Rupestrian art, Spain; c, vessel with human face, Parța, the Banat II culture, photo by Lazarovici Gh.; d. Figures with horns and bucrania: detail from the calendar of Stoycev and Gerassimova.

³²⁵ Hansen 2007.2, taf. 527.6.

³²⁶ Lazarovici Gh., Lazarovici C.-M. 2015, 91-92.

³²⁷ **DS Om 7**: Winn 1981, Zorlenț 1: Lazarovici Gh., Lazarovici C.-M. 2014, 218, Fig. 56; **DS om 34**: Roska 1941, Fig. 103/6; **DS 314**: Schier 2002, 27, pl. II/4B.

These may suggest the worship of the generations of bulls from the community, for the fertility of the herds of cattle, but in the rupestrian art they may have other related meanings or, if we are referring to the hunters/ process of hunting??, then this is most likely connected with the bison trophies or *bos primigenius*.

Bucranium in calendars

Our Bulgarian colleagues, T. Stoytchev and V. Gerassimova, have published some rupestrian signs related to the calendar³²⁸, in which the bucranium, the stylized human figures with horns appear in the proximity of the winter solstice, followed by a variant of the Cassiopeia during the period of January 11 to January 14.



Figura 14. Frieze of cave paintings represented ideograms and number sets (cave 2961, Bailovo, exact chronology unknown, 3000 B.C.).

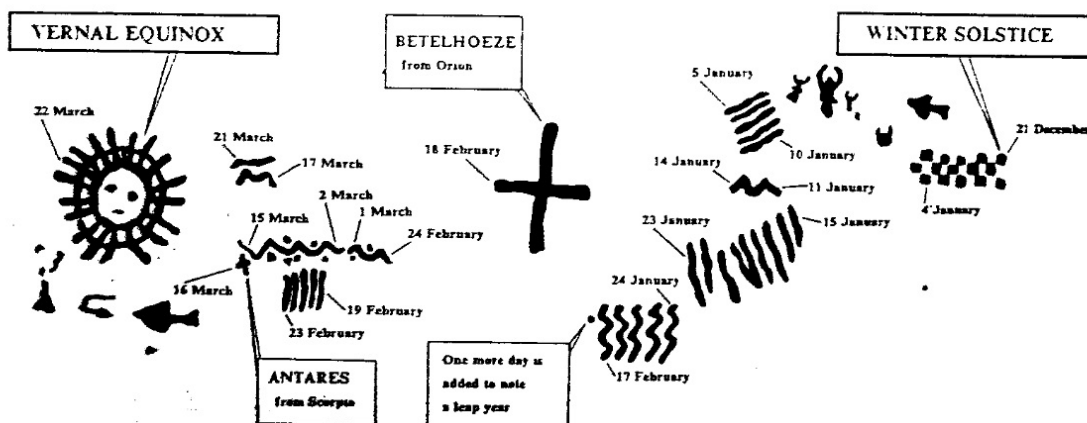


Fig. 135. Rupestrian signs interpreted by Stoytchev and Gerassimova as being a calendar.

We must notice that in the folkloric rituals of Maramureș, which are held during the feast of Saint Stephen, the masked carnivals are taking place, people using masks to disguise themselves as

bulls or rams. Around the same date, at the beginning of the New Year, there is the custom, in Maramureș and Moldova, of burying some ram bucrania, suggesting the burial of the old/previous year.

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³²⁸ Stoytchev, Gerassimova 1994, Fig. 14.

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SIGN, SYMBOL, DECORATION - PERSPECTIVES ON BENCHES FROM THE NEOLITHIC AND COPPER AGE IN SOUTH-EAST EUROPE

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In this study we intend to take a glimpse at a fixed piece of furniture discovered both in domestic contexts and in various worship buildings of South-East Europe. We will refer to benches, by correlating them with the decoration techniques, signs and symbols which particularise this type of objects.

In approaching such topics, the dilemma that arises is related to the difficulty to distinguish between two aspects of the prehistoric world. We naturally questioning how much is ritual and how much is profane in manufacturing a fixed object, in this case the bench from Neolithic buildings. Of course, the discovery context and associated objects are very important, but only these cannot provide ultimate answers in this case.

The inventory found in the proximity might suggest plausible answers on functionality, but the complete inventory associated with fixed items is rarely mentioned. The bench is an element located at low height, above the floor, and therefore sometimes it can be confused with a narrow platform. We consider the bench as a large-sized feature, while the banquette is smaller and narrower. According to *Dicţionarul explicativ al limbii române*, the Romanian noun *bancă* “bench” is defined as “Long and narrow seat designed for two or more persons”, so from the start we understand that the bench is not intended for a single person, being a community element.

The bench is a hallmark object for the religious architecture. Other essential components of worship buildings are recessed niches, reliefs, sculpted cassettes, tables, hearths, monumental altars, impressive columns and large antropomorphous statues. It is possible that benches, as well as buildings, were equipped with several perishable materials now lost, such as mats, fabrics or wooden objects¹. Benches or pedestals, as well as raised platforms are all furnishings made for sleeping, or they could be areas destined for product storage. Sometimes, in the case of cult spaces, these are areas where, the ritual props are stored, prepared or displayed².

¹ Foster 2007, 168; Kipfer 2000, 512.

² Lazarovici C.-M., Lazarovici Gh. 2007, 121.

Considering all these aspects, we think that first it is necessary to have an overview on as many examples as possible, including a space and time span as wide as possible, with the aim of looking at the worship bench and its associated contexts. The analysis we propose is both descriptive and statistical, with numeric indices related to frequency, types and shapes, and with discussion of the location of benches inside cult buildings.

THE FIRST SANCTUARIES: THE BENCH AND THE COMMUNITY OF ACERAMIC NEOLITHIC

The earliest religious buildings were identified in the first stages of Aceramic Neolithic (Pre-Pottery Neolithic-PPN), therefore we find the first benches there. It is not their mere presence inside religious buildings that defines them as ritual purpose elements, but the outstanding decoration on visible surfaces, as well as the inventory "hidden" underneath. We note that the stone benches in Anatolian sanctuaries are on the inner side, going around the rooms, as in the case of Tell 'Abr 3³, Building 13 at Nevali Çori⁴, Jerf el Ahmar⁵ and Hallan Çemi⁶.

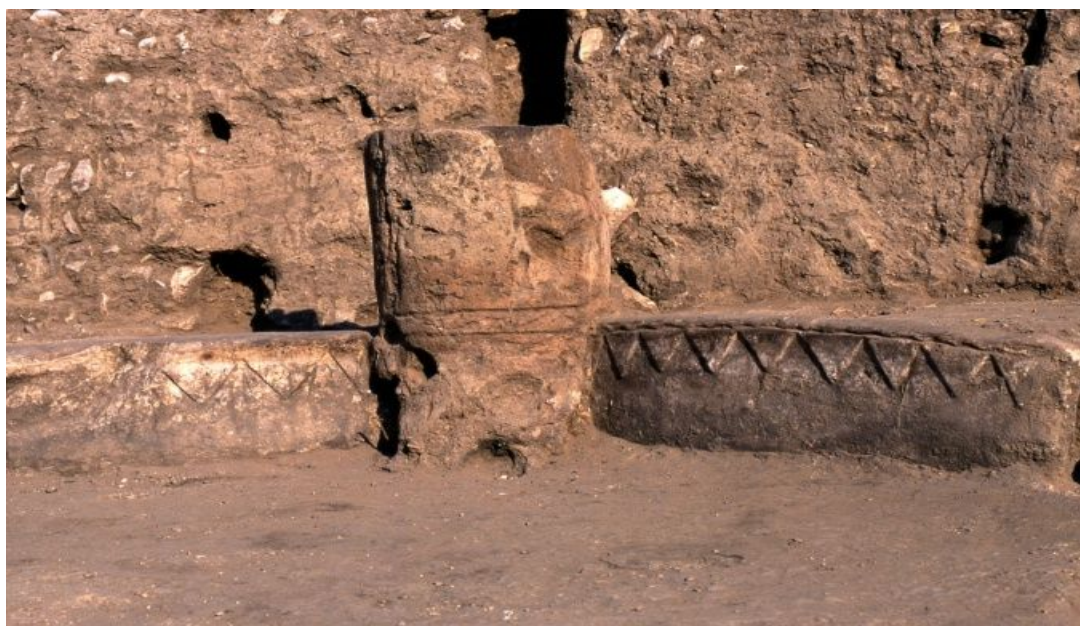


Fig. 1. Decorated bench in Community Building EA 53, Jerf el Ahmar (after Stordeur 2015, fig. 7).

Community building EA53 from Jerf el Ahmar (Syria) was completely preserved as a result of a fire, so it was possible to make observations on how the bench was made (Fig. 1). The building had a circular

³ Özdoğan 2007, 61; Rosenberg 2007, 56.

⁴ Hauptmann 1993, 37-69; Hauptmann 2007, 1-22; Hauptmann, Schmidt 2007, 79; Özdoğan 2007, 61.

⁵ Özdoğan 2007, 61; Rosenberg 2007, 56.

⁶ Rosenberg 2007, 542.

shape, without compartments, of 8m in diameter, and it was dug into the ground, to a depth of 2m. The walls were very likely painted, and no household objects were found inside. Considering the size and inventory, it was concluded that this was a community building. The bench was placed on the inner side of the circular wall, following the wall line and leaning against it. The width of the bench is 1 m and it formed a perfect equilateral hexagon on a length of 2.50m. At each corner of the hexagon was placed one wooden pole, to support the roof, which was covered with clay. The front side of the bench was decorated in a very ingenious way, aspects that we will discuss below⁷.

The bench from Building EA30 was made in a different manner, determined by its inner partitioning. It has an elliptical shape (7.40/6.80m) and was deepened about 2 meters. The interior space was divided by narrow walls into six different rooms (Fig. 2).

It was assumed that this building had several purposes; one mentioned is food storage in the pantry. Community meetings are suggested by the central space provided with a bench including also some sort of rituals, proved by the presence of a headless skeleton - found on the floor of the central room and crushed by the fallen roof- and the discovery of an exceptional inventory. The bench was fixed in front of two of the compartments. The bench was divided in two areas, of different heights, with a front side made of cylindrical stones. The upper side was coated with a fine plaster, made of clay and cereals residues, but after an intensive use, this vanished⁸.

From the same time span as Jerf el Ahmar is the site Tell 'Abr 3 (Mureybetan culture, PPNA). Community structure B2 has circular shape, typical for this site and for the cultural area (Fig. 3). The inner arrangement and inventory individualised the building within the site. The bench has semicircular shape, following the line of the wall, and it is decorated with several stone engravings, originally made in relief, with geometric patterns or zoomorphic representations⁹. Into the bench were integrated two stone stellas, about one meter high, on which predators were engraved¹⁰ (Fig. 4, 32, 33, 35). For our discussion it is important to note that behind the gazelle stone slab a deposit of aurochs skulls was found¹¹.

⁷ Stordeur 2000, 3; Stordeur et alii 2000, 29-44.

⁸ Stordeur et alii 2000, 35.

⁹ Rosenberg 2007, 56.

¹⁰ Yartah 2004, 147.

¹¹ Yartah 2004, 146, fig. 7.

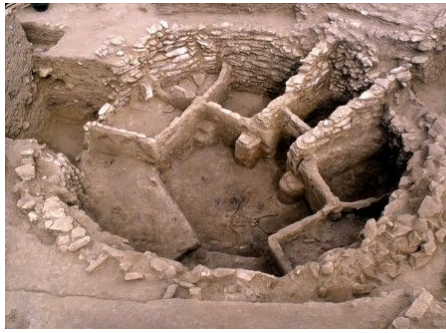


Fig. 2. Community Building EA30, Jerf el Ahmar (after Stordeur 2015, fig. 5).

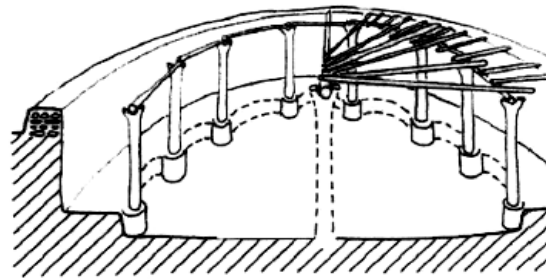


Fig. 3. Drawing reconstruction of Community Building B2 from Tell 'Abr 3 (after Yartah 2004, 147, fig. 8/2).

It is difficult to reconstruct the activities of building B2, but given the wear of the top layer of the bench, and the size of the building, this was used for meetings for a long time by small groups. After removing parts from the bench, under it a deposit of several objects was found, such as aurochs shoulders and flint blades, including a dagger that was placed in the wall structure. The slabs of the central chamber were decorated¹².

At 'Ain Mallaha (Enyan-Israel) the Natufian deposits were mainly due to debris resulting from stone buildings. Inside House no. 1 the floor was paved and the walls were covered with plaster, discovered in a calcined state. This plaster has traces of red paintings, one of the earliest evidence of using lime plaster, covered with red ochre, throughout the Middle East¹³.

¹² Stordeur, Abbès 2002, 576.

¹³ Mellaart 1975, 36, fig. 5.

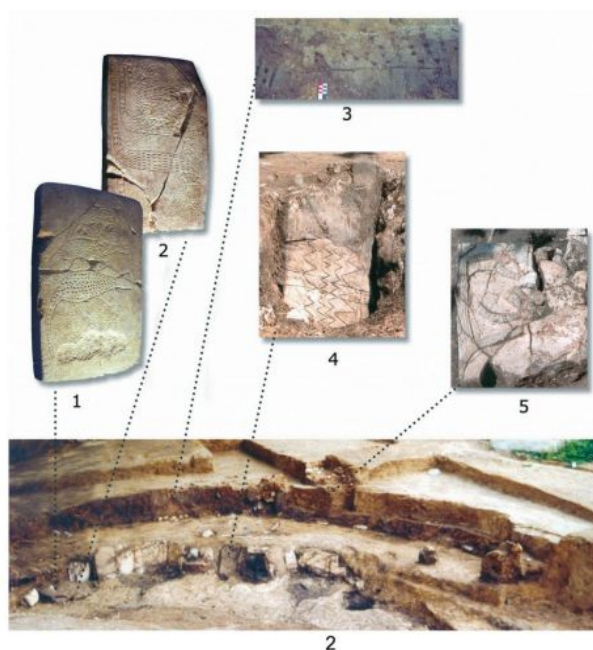


Fig. 4. The position of the decorated stone slabs inside the Community Building from Tell 'Abr 3: 1, 2, 5 – slabs decorated with panthers; 4: slab with gazelles; 3: decorated wall plaster behind the bench (after Yartah 2013, II, 128, fig. 112/2).

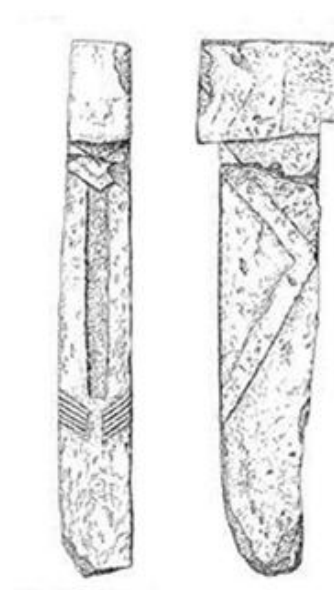


Fig. 5. One of the central columns from Building 13 in Nevali Çori (after K. Schmidt 2007).

The bench was made in the same manner as others in contemporary aceramic shrines, that is semicircular, along the wall. The bench surface was covered with limestone pieces and the edge was bordered by stone slabs¹⁴. The arrangements, indoor facilities and several artifacts found together, demonstrate that the building did not have a domestic purpose¹⁵. Moreover, the researcher O. Bar-Yosef thinks that the building could have been used for ritual purposes by a community leader or a shaman¹⁶. In the second level of habitation traces from a circular building with vertical wooden pillars were found. A bucranium and two blades, made of horse humerus were discovered, all packed in clay on purpose and integrated beneath the bench¹⁷.

At Mureybet the architecture is similar to other contemporary sites, namely Jerf el Ahmar and Tell 'Abr 3. Attention is drawn by "House 47", where a hearth was found next to the bench, made in the same manner as the others, wide and low¹⁸.

Most community buildings in this area are characterized primarily by a rich ornamentation on the slabs, decorating the bench, along with the lack of domestic inventory and the emergence of special

¹⁴ Bar-Yosef 1998, 163.

¹⁵ Goring-Morris 2002, 116; Thomas 2010, 119.

¹⁶ Bar-Yosef 1998, 163.

¹⁷ Goring-Morris 2002, 121.

¹⁸ Stordeur et alii 2000, 36.

circumstances, such as foundation deposits. The benches of the first phase of aceramic neolithic sanctuaries (PPNA) are truly spectacular, considering the age in which they were made (9500-8700 CAL BC)¹⁹.

Researches of Hallan Çemi (south-eastern Turkey) gave additional data concerning the community's organization²⁰. Deposits in the settlement have a thickness of 4.30m and they cover several centuries²¹.

The space is divided into a large central room, with a bench along the wall. The access is through the roof, which was at ground level²². During the first habitational layer, four stone buildings were used. There were identified plastered hearths and floors/platforms. The semi-circular stone benches were located along the wall²³.

Starting with the second phase of aceramic neolithic (PPNB) there is a clear shift in terms of planning buildings and space; development is visible at the architectural and artistic level. The sanctuary - Building 13 - from Nevalı Çori was rectangular, with dimensions of 16 x 7m²⁴. The interior is particularly spectacular, presenting "T-shaped" monolithic columns – monumental stellas²⁵. We note the stone bench near the wall, going around the room (Fig. 6). This was covered in clay and 13 T-columns, buried about one meter deep, were placed into the bench from place to place (Fig. 5)²⁶.

On the south-eastern wall the bench was interrupted by a deep niche, 1.85m wide and 2.5m deep. Inside was a pedestal²⁷. Another niche, associated with a T-shaped column, was dug in the corner opposite to the entrance²⁸. Important to note is that most monumental sculptures of the site were found inside Building 13. During investigations, 11 fragments of statues, some with detailed zoomorphic features were found²⁹.

In the case of Building III we note the two pillars marking the entrance. In front of the door, on the opposite wall, there was a niche behind the bench. Two sculptures come from this area: a human head with a snake sculpted like a bas-relief and one with a stylized shape. Inside the walls of the bench from the 2nd construction phase there were discovered six fragments of sculptures and from the 3rd phase of construction four fragments were discovered³⁰. The anthropomorphic and zoomorphic representations, made on the massive stone blocks, are all made in the same manner. This aspect proves either a single artist with an

¹⁹ Stordeur 2015.

²⁰ Rosenberg, Redding 2002, 16.

²¹ Rosenberg 2007, 54.

²² Rosenberg 2007, 56.

²³ Rosenberg, Redding 2002, 44.

²⁴ Hauptmann 2007, 86.

²⁵ Voigt 2002, 270; Lazarovici C.-M., Lazarovici Gh. 2006, 29.

²⁶ Hauptmann 1993.

²⁷ Hole 2002, 201.

²⁸ Hole 2002, 202.

²⁹ Hauptmann, Schmidt 2007, 67.

³⁰ Hauptmann, Schmidt 2007, 67

articulate conception, or that behind these monuments there is a mythology and a specific, articulate vision about the world³¹.

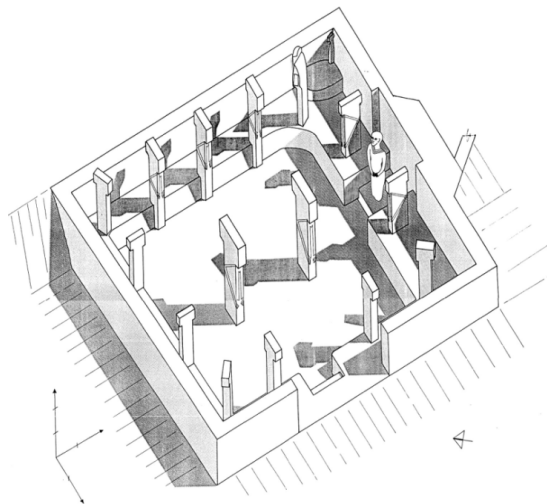


Fig. 6. Drawing reconstruction of Building 13 from Nevalı Çori (after Lichter 2010, 587, fig. 3).



Fig. 7. Slab stone engraving representing a woman on a bench from Göbekli Tepe (after Meskell 2011, 255, fig. 5).

We cannot fail to mention the benches from the monumental structures at Göbekli Tepe (Turkey)³². Considering the numerous studies on the mobile and immobile inventory of the site, we will not insist on the subject. We will note only that inside the megalithic buildings the stone benches are connected with the T-shaped columns³³.

The images, carved in relief, show ferocious animals, which played a symbolic role in the Early Neolithic world. Also, the size of the representations is outstanding: they are either oversized or full scale, most of them made in a naturalistic manner³⁴.

The only female representation found so far at Göbekli Tepe was scratched on the ledge of a low bench, discovered in one of the buildings of Level II. Considering how refined and realistic the sculptures and reliefs on the columns were, we can observe that the female representation is somewhat sloppy (Fig. 7). The physiognomy is barely sketched; the breasts are small and flaccid. Instead, what surprises is the position of the character. The genital area is clearly drawn and there appears something that can be interpreted as a penis,

³¹ Özdoğan 2007, 63.

³² Schmidt 2000, 49; Schmidt 2007.

³³ Schmidt 1998, 3.

³⁴ Schmidt 2003, 3.

detached from the body, or vaginal fluid. A precise interpretation of the drawing or its association with the bench on which it appears we did not find. The discoverers assumed that the association of this image to a fertility concept is very unlikely³⁵.

At Çayönü there were documented three special rectangular buildings that stand out from the other structures investigated until now. The oldest one is Flagstone Building, with the floor paved with limestone slabs. The northern wall has two rectangular columns connected to it, looking like buttresses. Right in front of these two columns, in the center, there are two stone slabs, installed in vertical position. These could have had a cultic role, like a stella, or a functional one, to support the roof. A third monumental stone slab was in front of a bench, which is located on the eastern side³⁶. In the early stages a relatively large cult structure was built, called „The Terrazzo Building” of 11.75 x 9 m³⁷. A bench is mentioned at the rear of the room³⁸.

ÇATALHÖYÜK. THE BENCH AS AN ALTAR OR THE ALTAR-BENCH?

The Anatolian region astonishes through a series of outstanding items regarding religious architecture. The Çatalhöyük site of Turkey is unavoidable, given that it is one of the most spectacular Neolithic sites ever found. The most remarkable benches of the Neolithic period were discovered in this site, along with other aspects, such as architecture, wall paintings, a high number of symbolic, non-functional or ritual elements. The inventories found around the benches often drew the attention of those who investigated the buildings.

For example, inside Building 3, near the bench two very beautifully crafted obsidian points and several animal bones were found³⁹. Building 42, ascribed to the 5th level of habitation, has some interesting features related to the symbolic behaviour of its inhabitants. Along with fixed elements, frequently found in domestic buildings, such as hearths or kilns, located on the south side of the building, there are many others suggesting ritual practices⁴⁰.

The benches which really draw attention, were the ones discovered by James Mellaart inside the buildings, published as „shrines” in the 60s of the 20th century⁴¹. There are mentioned benches inside shrines A.II.1⁴²; A.VI.1⁴³; E.VI.10⁴⁴; E.VI.14⁴⁵; E.VI.7⁴⁶; E.VI.7⁴⁷; E.VI.8 in all four layers, ⁴⁸; E.VI.A.50⁴⁹;

³⁵ Meskell 2013, 255.

³⁶ Meskell 2013, 200.

³⁷ Özdoğan 2007, 59.

³⁸ Hole 2002, 201.

³⁹ Hodder 2002.

⁴⁰ Chaffey, McCann, 2004, 63.

⁴¹ Mellaart 1962, 42-60; Mellaart 1963, 45-97; Mellaart 1964, 40-113; Mellaart 1966, 165-191; Mellaart 1967; Mellaart 1975.

⁴² Mellaart 1963, 45.

⁴³ Mellaart 1963, pl.VI, b.

E.VI.B.45⁵⁰; E.VII.21⁵¹; IX.8⁵²; VII.10⁵³; X.1⁵⁴; VII.8⁵⁵; VI.B.70⁵⁶. Two benches were noted in shrines E.VI.B.1⁵⁷; VII.1⁵⁸ și VII.35⁵⁹.



Fig. 8. Bucrania on a clay column from Shrine A.VI.1 (after Mellaart 1963, pl.VI,a).

A very interesting type of bench found at Çatalhöyük is the one with the horns or skulls, totally or partially embedded in the top part. The most spectacular bench is the one discovered by J. Mellaart in shrine A.VI.1 (Fig. 8). This one was plastered with clay (Fig. 9, 10). It was observed that the top included six pairs of horns arranged in a row and a seventh pair was placed a little higher at the end of the plastered bench, near

⁴⁴ Mellaart 1964, 51, fig. 9.

⁴⁵ Mellaart 1963, 76, fig. 17.

⁴⁶ Mellaart 1963, 74, fig. 16.

⁴⁷ Mellaart 1963, 74, fig. 16.

⁴⁸ Mellaart 1963, 63, fig. 9; Mellaart 1963, 64, fig. 10; Mellaart 1963, 65, fig. 11; Mellaart 1963, 66, fig. 12; Mellaart 1963, 62, fig. 8; Mellaart 1963, pl. IX, b.

⁴⁹ Mellaart 1964, 43, fig. 4.

⁵⁰ Mellaart 1964, 45.

⁵¹ Mellaart 1964, 68, fig. 22.

⁵² Mellaart 1964, 71, fig. 24.

⁵³ Mellaart 1964, 60, fig. 17.

⁵⁴ Mellaart 1964, 72, fig. 25.

⁵⁵ Mellaart 1964, 65, fig. 20.

⁵⁶ Mellaart 1966, 174.

⁵⁷ Mellaart 1964, 59, fig. 16.

⁵⁸ Mellaart 1964, 56, fig. 14.

⁵⁹ Mellaart 1964, 69, fig. 23.

the wall⁶⁰. It is possible that the number was not chosen randomly, given the unique importance of this figure in the universal symbolism⁶¹.

Several horns embedded in benches from the same site, were found in shrine E.VI.50, a single pair (Fig. 11). Near the bench there was an anthropomorphic figure painted red, a plastic representation of the goddess, with arms and legs raised, and a triangular head. In front of the goddess there are three horns of bulls deposited on a small platform⁶².

Three pairs of horns were set up in the top part of the bench from shrine E.VI.14⁶³ (Fig. 12). Five pairs of horns are mentioned by J. Mellaart as integrated in a bench from a building framed in layer VI.B, without mentioning the name of the building⁶⁴.

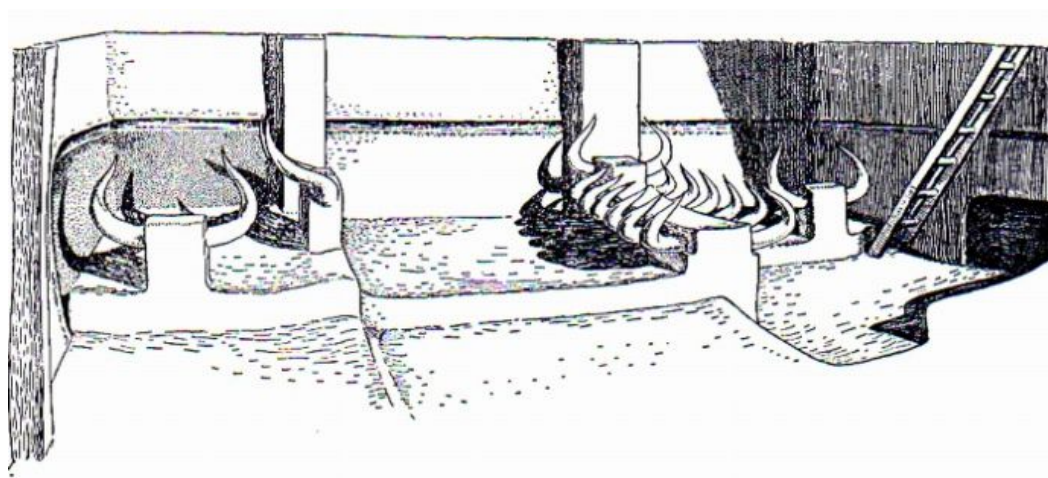


Fig. 9. Graphic reconstruction of the north-eastern corner from Shrine A.VI.1 (after Mellaart 1963, 53, fig. 4).

The practice of inserting horns in the benches is a special case and we do not think it is coincidence that these cultic elements were placed mostly along the eastern walls, which are mostly used for plastic representations and monumental elements in general⁶⁵.

⁶⁰ Mellaart 1963, 52.

⁶¹ Chevalier, Gheerbrant 1994, 884.

⁶² Mellaart 1964, 42.

⁶³ Mellaart 1963, 76, fig. 17.

⁶⁴ Mellaart 1966a, 142.

⁶⁵ Kovács 2015, 221.

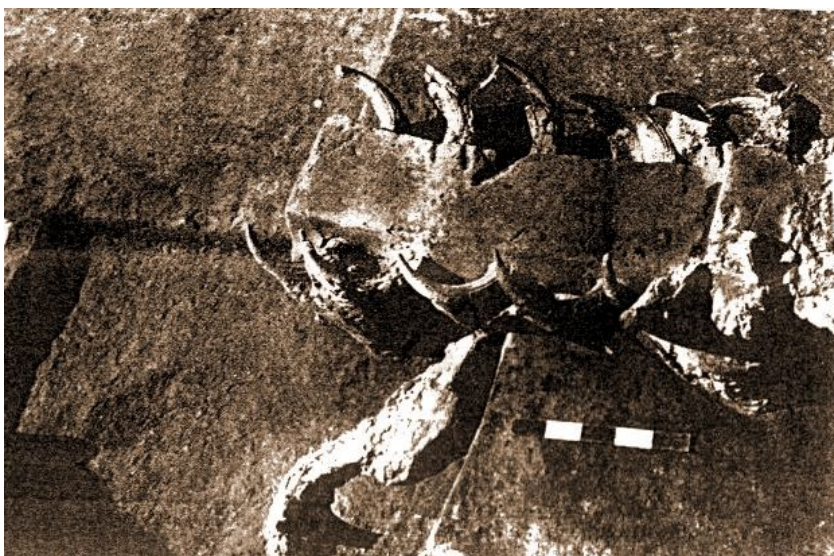


Fig. 10. The seven pairs of horns embedded in the bench – photo made by J. Mellaart (after Mellaart 1963, pl. VI, b).

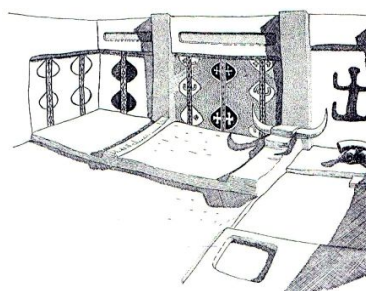


Fig. 11. Graphic reconstruction of the eastern wall from Shrine E.VI.50. One pair of horns embedded in a bench (after Mellaart 1964, 43, fig. 4).

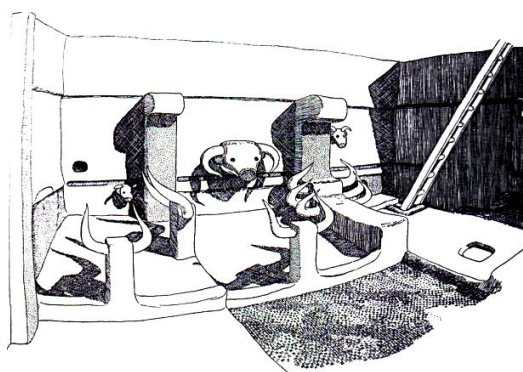


Fig. 12. Graphic reconstruction of the eastern wall from Shrine E.VI.14. Three pairs of horns embedded in a bench (after Mellaart 1963, 76, fig. 17).

Integrating the horns into the benches structure is not a common practice, not even in shrines or temples. The most impressive pairs, considering the size and their number, were inserted in short columns made of clay, which mostly limit the platforms, as in the case of shrines E.VI.14⁶⁶ and A.VI.1⁶⁷ (Fig. 8).

⁶⁶ Mellaart 1963, 76, fig. 17.

⁶⁷ Mellaart 1963, 53, fig. 4.



Fig. 13. Horns integrated in the north side of the bench F. 2021 from Space 94 (Bogdan 2005, 54, fig. 38).



Fig. 14. Bench with horns integrated from Space 94 – general view (Bogdan 2005, 55, fig. 40).

Regarding recent researches we notice that the benches with integrated horns and skulls were found in several cases. In Building 1, Space 70 the bench is used to separate the inner space on the east-west direction. Inside it contained traces of what would have been a pair of horns embedded at its eastern end. Several bovine bones were found on both sides of the bench⁶⁸.

Despite the fact that Building 80 was cleaned before abandonment, there was discovered enough evidence to draw the conclusion that the building was a quite sophisticated one. The bench was placed along the eastern wall, near the access ladder. In the top part preserved in position there were two stumps of bovine horns, which were integrated into the structure⁶⁹. The bench had a square area, slightly raised, where two pairs of broken horns were integrated⁷⁰.

⁶⁸ Matthews 1995.

⁶⁹ Hodder 2010, 3.

⁷⁰ Regan 2010, 14.



Fig. 15. Bucrania integrated in the first oldest level of the bench from Building 52 (after Tung 2013, 15, fig. 1.4).

During recent research a single bench was documented so far in conditions similar to those of Mellaart's discoveries, namely the one found in Building 52, Space 94, investigated in two stages: 2005⁷¹ and 2013⁷². The bench was in the central area, on the east-west direction. It had integrated a series of three pairs of cattle horns, only on the north side of it, associated with cattle skulls with horns, placed in a niche cut in the western wall. All skulls faced the center of the room⁷³ (Fig. 13, 14). The bench was made of clay, covered with white plaster on the upper side⁷⁴.

After removing the top level, an older bench was discovered, containing at least five pairs of rams' horns. The first pair of horns was attached to the skull, which was cut and placed inside the bench structure, fixed above the sixth pair of horns (Fig. 15). It seems that the skulls were placed individually imitating the natural position⁷⁵. The rooms included a space dedicated for storage, with 4 boxes stacked along the eastern and northern wall, in which were found large quantities of charred grains⁷⁶. This building apparently played an important role in the life of the community⁷⁷. Even though it seems that similar arrangements existed in other buildings too, these were destroyed before abandonment.

⁷¹ Bogdan 2005, 26-29.

⁷² Hodder 2013, 1-5.

⁷³ Bogdan 2005, 46.

⁷⁴ Bogdan 2005, 55.

⁷⁵ Tung 2013, 15.

⁷⁶ Bogdan 2005, 46.

⁷⁷ Hodder 2013, 4.

The situation is found in other areas of the site too, like Space 248 from TP area. The most important discovery in this room is a skull with horns from a female auroch, intentionally deposited on the floor, embedded later in the bench structure. Also, there was discovered the partially preserved skeleton of a woman placed on the right side, with the head towards west. The skull sustained a bucranium, facing the bench, attached to the western wall⁷⁸.

In Building 10 the bench was rebuilt in three different phases. Its surface (feature F.1310) contained two semi-circular objects inserted, probably cattle horns. The circular painted pattern was covered with a plaster layer and it is obvious that the bench changed appearance over time. There were observed various traces of red paint on the walls, but no consistent fragments were recovered so that the decoration was not reconstructed⁷⁹.

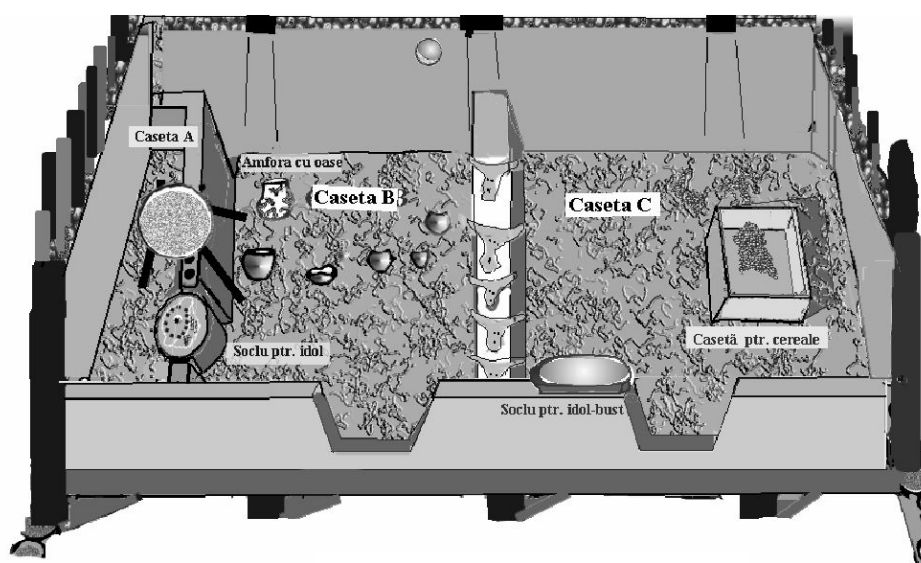


Fig. 16. The bench separating cassettes B and C in Temple 2 from Parța, Timiș County (after Lazarovici Gh. et alii 2001, 227, fig. 191).

In the European area, for the moment, a single bench of this kind was discovered, a very narrow one with cattle horns integrated (Fig. 16). This one was placed in Temple 2 from Parța, Timiș County, Romania. In the upper side horned skulls, coming from small and medium size cattle, were embedded; the bench separated two different altars from Temple 2⁸⁰. In discussing the bench with cattle horns, we can see that this item is associated with several cult contexts found in Temple 2, which provides information regarding the special rituals performed inside the building. Altar-tables B and C were partially destroyed by a pit dug in a

⁷⁸ Czerniak, Marciniak 2005, 81-82.

⁷⁹ Jónsson 2003, 57.

⁸⁰ Lazarovici Gh. et alii 2001, I.2, pl. 57/2;67/6.

subsequent period, probably during 5a level⁸¹. On altar-table B were found several vessels, among which we may mention the amphora type pot with a human face, containing bones⁸². Altar table C had several important items, such as a cereal box with an anthropomorphic head wearing a triangular mask/face attached on one side. The idol's face was painted red. This box, by its features, may have been used to preserve and "consecrate" the cereals in the sanctuary⁸³.

Given the particularities of benches with horns fixed inside, or on top of them, it might be reasonable to reassess the term "bench" which designates these architectural units⁸⁴.

BENCHES, SANCTUARIES AND ALTARS – CULT INVENTORY AND CONTEXTS

The Balkan area brought new data regarding the settling of benches in Neolithic cult contexts. The sanctuary from Tumba Madžari (Proto-Sesklo culture, Veluška-Porodin group), site near Skopje (Republic of Macedonia), is the only building published, although several were investigated. The building has a square shape with dimensions of 8 x 8m and was built in a traditional manner, supported by poles stuck in the ground, sometimes immobilised with stones (Fig. 17, 18).

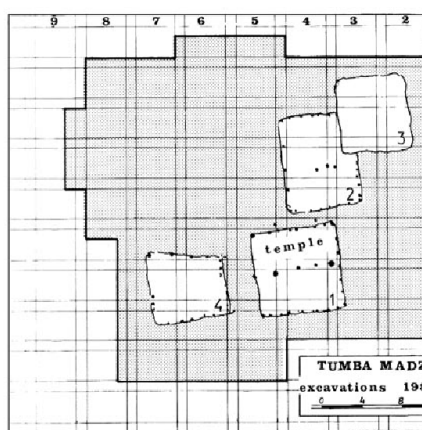


Fig. 17. The location of the Tumba Madžari temple within the settlement (after Moskalewska and Sanev 1989, 57).

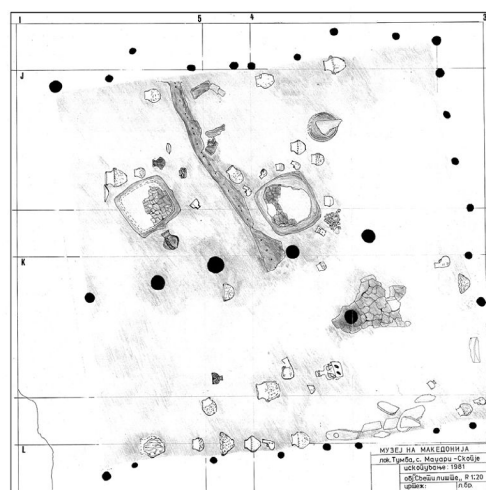


Fig. 18. Tumba Madžari - Temple plan (after Naumov 2011, 13, pl. 2/b).

The inner space is divided by a thin wattle and daub screen⁸⁵. The walls were decorated on the outside with simple spiral coils, made with the fingers. The bench was decorated with an incised chevron pattern and it is associated with an oven and a rich mobile inventory consisting of cups and a large number of vessels of

⁸¹ Lazarovici Gh. et alii 2001, 228.

⁸² Lazarovici Gh. et alii 2001, 229.

⁸³ Lazarovici Gh. et alii 2001, 229; Lazarovici Gh. 2003, 75.

⁸⁴ Tung 2013, 15.

⁸⁵ Mitrevski 2006, 22.

the askos and pythos types⁸⁶. The goblets found near the wall were probably used to collect and preserve the blood of slaughtered animals, and then placed as an offering on the bench in the sanctuary⁸⁷. Three offering tables covering a surface of 1 sq.m, small clay boxes, and a large figurine, higher than 39 cm⁸⁸, placed over a house model, a group of loom weights, all these particularise the space.

At Achilleion (Greece) a Sesklo-culture sanctuary with two rooms was found. The larger space was interpreted as dedicated to worship, having a bench inside, while the smaller one could have been used for preparing rituals⁸⁹. Preparing any kind of ritual supposes a prior preparation, props, specially made and decorated pottery. The workshop had a fireplace inside. About 30 figurines were found on the bench and around it, along with many fragmented pots⁹⁰. The sanctuary's courtyard was equipped with a range of ritual facilities⁹¹ (Fig. 19). The altar-table, made of stone, is large enough to support figurines, vessels and other items necessary to perform ceremonies. The clay platform is slightly inclined and had four small holes in the corners, probably to secure the offering goblets. On the platform traces of coal were found, which could indicate that sacrifices were performed by burning (fumigatio, as observed in Temples 1 and 2 from Parța)⁹². Along with the four elements found here, specifying the oven, bench, hearth and stone altar, in the same area were found a few outstanding items: large vessels with vertical handles, several figurines, complete or fragmented, some of them wearing masks⁹³. M. Gimbutas stated that most vessels were used in cultic activities, relating the painted patterns with symbolic representations⁹⁴.

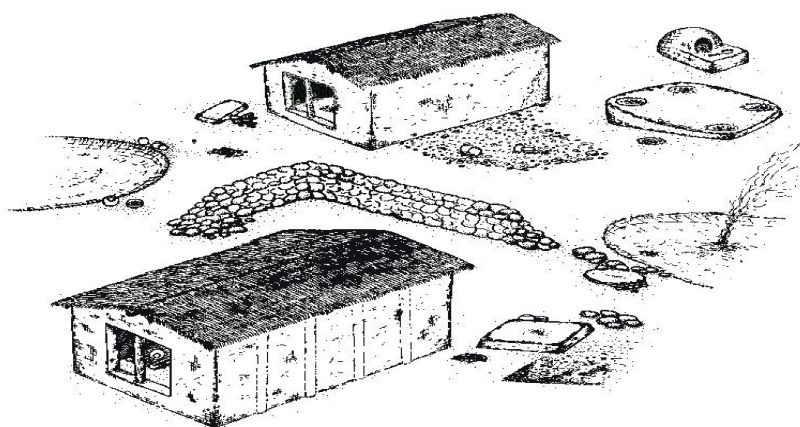


Fig. 19. Graphic reconstruction of the sanctuary's courtyard from Achilleion (after Gimbutas et alii 1989, 48).

⁸⁶ Kovács 2013-2014, 69.

⁸⁷ Sanev 2006, 173; Angeleski 2014, 234.

⁸⁸ Šemrov, Turk 2009, p. 145, fig 41.

⁸⁹ Gimbutas 1997, 52.

⁹⁰ Gimbutas et alii 1989, 62.

⁹¹ Bánffy 1990-1991, 207; Perlès 2004, 194.

⁹² Lazarovici Gh. et alii 2001, I.1, fig. 176, 191, 192, fig. 165-168; 242, 244, 308, 329 and so on.

⁹³ Gimbutas 1999, 77.

⁹⁴ Gimbutas et alii 1989, 221.

Sanctuary 1 (House 1) from Kormadin, Serbia, had a special bench for presenting offerings to the gods; the object transformed through burning, is mentioned in the report but is not shown in subsequent graphic reconstructions⁹⁵. The association between bench and oven is identified also in a building at Topolnica Promachon (Greece). The bench was placed against the western wall. On its surface fragments from three relief protomes representing females were found. It is possible that the three protomes have actually been above the bench, on the wall⁹⁶.

The temples from Parța were placed in the center of the site⁹⁷. Temple 2 is one of the best analysed worship buildings of the European Neolithic, which allows us not to repeat what was already published⁹⁸. We intend only to synthesize information from previous publications and to draw attention on a special type of bench discovered here which we discussed above⁹⁹. The bench of Parța, the fact that it separated two different altars (cassettes B and C), its lack of functionality, the detached cattle skull/head integrated, associated with an inventory that can be connected with sacrifices, suggest that some of the slaughtered animals were kept, embedded and used, perhaps, as a totem inside the temple. At Gălățui – *Movila Berzei* (Călărași County, Romania, Boian culture, Giulești phase) seven benches inside a single building were found, as a certain proof of the communal role of the space¹⁰⁰. The human skull, along with fragments from a small altar, found under the floor could indicate a foundation ritual¹⁰¹.

⁹⁵ Jovanović M. 2011, 36, fig. 13.

⁹⁶ Todorova, Vajsov 1993; Koukouli-Chrysanthaki et alii 1997, 48.

⁹⁷ Lazarovici C.-M., Lazarovici Gh. 2007, 303.

⁹⁸ Lazarovici Gh. 1989, 149-174; Lazarovici Gh. 1998, 83-92; Lazarovici Gh. 1986; Lazarovici C.-M., Lazarovici Gh. 2006a, 117-125; Lazarovici C.-M., Lazarovici Gh. 2008, 9-40; Lazarovici Gh. et alii 1985, 7-71; Lazarovici Gh. et alii 2001; Lazarovici Gh. et alii 1994, 106-134; Lazarovici Gh. et alii 2002, 7-17; Rus, Lazarovici Gh. 1991, 87-118.

⁹⁹ Lazarovici Gh. et alii 2001, I.2, pl. 57/2; 67/6.

¹⁰⁰ Neagu 2000, 29; Neagu 2003, 92.

¹⁰¹ Neagu 2000, 29-30; Neagu et alii 2001, 85-86.

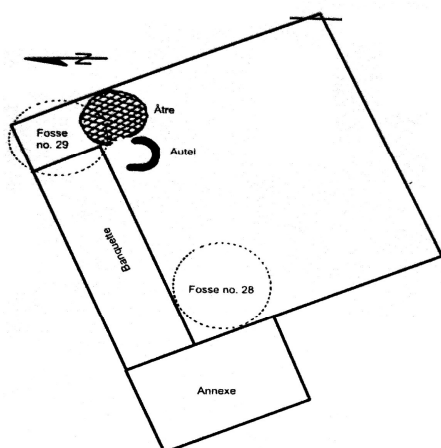


Fig. 20. The plan of the sanctuary L. 11 at Târgu Frumos – Baza Pătule (after Ursulescu, Tencariu 2004, 131, fig. 2).

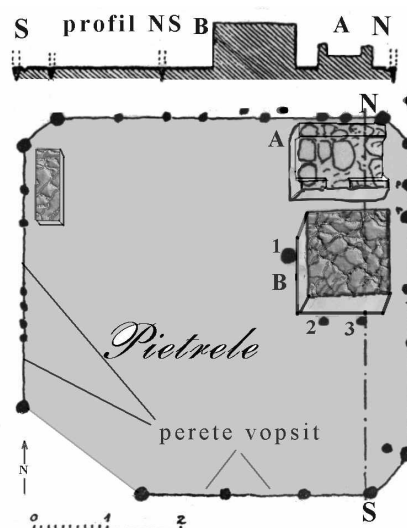


Fig. 21. The plan of the sanctuary at Pietrele (after Lazarovici C.-M., Lazarovici Gh. 2007, 133).

Wall painting, associated with two columns, a bench and a burial in crouched position, under the floor of the building were discovered in the case of Căscioarele sanctuary of the Boian culture¹⁰². The finds from Târgu Frumos – Baza Pătule, Precucuteni culture, brought additional data regarding the association between various facilities with the bench. Building L.11 had inside a large hearth for offerings, built over a pit (Fig. 20). The bench was made of clay on a structure of poles and set up in the northwestern part of the hearth. It may have been used for storage or display of offerings or of the mobile inventory during ceremonies. We do not exclude its use for meetings of venerable members of the community¹⁰³. In this case the bench is associated with fragments of an altar which had on its front side paintings with geometric patterns (circle integrated in a lozenge)¹⁰⁴.

The bench of Sabatinovka is interesting and famous, considering the inventory found inside¹⁰⁵. The sanctuary discovered by Makarević and Danilenko, partially affected by subsequent works, was published with a graphic reconstruction, later introduced as such in the literature. The numerology of the associated objects found on and around the bench was the subject for several analyses: 32 female statuettes among which two painted red, a possible tray and a table, 20 vessels, complete or restorable, 55 flint tools, 10 miniature chairs. Near the bench there was a large, monumental chair with ends in the shape of clay bucrania¹⁰⁶. M. Gimbutas described the assembly of the 32 statuettes from Sabatinovka as representing the

¹⁰² Dumitrescu H. 1968, 381-390.

¹⁰³ Ursulescu, Tencariu 2004, 139; Lazarovici C.-M., Lazarovici Gh. 2008, 16.

¹⁰⁴ Ursulescu, Tencariu 2004, 137, 139; Lazarovici C.-M., Lazarovici Gh. 2008, 16.

¹⁰⁵ Gimbutas 1984, 74, 25; Gimbutas 1989, 133, fig. 215; Monah 1997, 35; 255, fig. 3-1.

¹⁰⁶ Lazarovici C.-M., Lazarovici Gh. 2008, 11.

image of a complex scene related to the mystery of death and regeneration, as motivated by the idol's typology. The lack of arms and the snake-shaped body is interpreted as the multiplied image of a snake-goddess¹⁰⁷.

In the Gumelnița culture there occurred cult contexts in which the benches were present. The building of Pietrele – *Măgura Gorgana* (Giurgiu County, Romania)¹⁰⁸ shows some associations of features such as the rectangular hearth (1.25 x 1m)¹⁰⁹ with a square bench structure¹¹⁰ (Fig. 21). Around the hearth there were various tools and an antler "scepter"¹¹¹. The small size of the bench and its shape suggest that it was a place to display statuettes or other mobile items (Fig. 22). The published inventory is spectacular, with multiple objects highlighting the rich cultural activity. Along with the bench two slightly raised platforms are mentioned, one white and one yellow. The discoverer, D. Berciu, mentioned many objects with a strong symbolic component, such as scepters, zoomorphic and anthropomorphic representations¹¹². In the northern corner there was a pedestal (1 m x 0.40 m x 10 cm) on which a bowl of charred flour was found. On the western side there were some fragmented tools, such as grinders, various types of pots stacked one over another. Near the same wall, in the central area, there was a second clay platform (0.80 x 0.45 x 0.05m) supporting seven flat bucrania/consecration horns, made of clay. Other objects were mentioned in the area, such as idols made of bone, copper items, adornments (beads, pierced snail shells, bone pendants)¹¹³.



Fig. 22. Photography with the bench of the Pietrele Sanctuary (after Berciu 1956, 499, fig. 17).

¹⁰⁷ Gimbutas 1989, 133.

¹⁰⁸ Berciu 1956, 493-562.

¹⁰⁹ Berciu 1956, 507, fig. 16A.

¹¹⁰ Berciu 1956, 511.

¹¹¹ Berciu 1956, 511.

¹¹² Berciu 1956, 511-514.

¹¹³ Berciu 1956, 511.

The discoverer noticed also the presence of a tortoise shell and two clay containers, one containing a black substance. In the same building there was also a house model¹¹⁴. This building was interpreted as a community sanctuary, taking into account the inventory and inner furniture¹¹⁵, although certain information must be critically reviewed, since the discoverer himself confessed the loss of the excavation diary.

Inside the Tangâru sanctuary (Giurgiu County, Romania), the clay bench was centrally located, next to the remains of a monumental statue¹¹⁶. It is possible that the large antropomorphous representation was placed on the bench; in this case the bench played the role of a pedestal¹¹⁷. Near the bench were found several complete or restorable vessels, along with three antropomorphous statuettes¹¹⁸.

At Hârșova (Constanța County, Romania) a cultual building was found and, only partially investigated, where two large altars, a clay box and a large bench were worthy of consideration¹¹⁹. The shape of the bench is rectangular and it was made of clay. Its' height is 17cm¹²⁰.

In the site from Mălăieștii de Jos (Prahova County) a building with a rich inventory was excavated; it comprised over 50 vessels near the walls and around the oven; the bench was located against the western wall¹²¹.

Regarding a possible cultual architecture for the Sălcuța culture, there are no conclusive data. Inside House 4 at Piscul Cornișorului, Dolj County, D. Berciu observed a bench and an idol, along with several clay weights. Berciu considered the bench to be a pedestal, of a rectangular shape (145 x 45 x 20cm). The colour of the bench is yellow, and it is made of unburnt clay¹²². From the same context 28 clay weights (conical-shaped or stylized bucrania) and a female statuette were recovered¹²³. The Căscioarele sanctuary of the Gumelnița layer had a bench inside, described as rudimentary. In the graphic reconstitution, proposed by C.-M. Lazarovici and Gh. Lazarovici, there appears a wooden bench, but it could have been made of clay¹²⁴.

¹¹⁴ Berciu 1956, 512, fig. 29/1; Lazarovici C.-M., Lazarovici Gh. 2007, 144, fig. Vc.87b.

¹¹⁵ Lazarovici C.-M., Lazarovici Gh. 2007, 134.

¹¹⁶ Berciu 1961, 420-421.

¹¹⁷ Lazarovici C.-M., Lazarovici Gh. 2007, 137.

¹¹⁸ Berciu 1961, 471; Lazarovici C.-M., Lazarovici Gh. 2007, 136, 137, fig. Vc.76,76/b.

¹¹⁹ Lazarovici C.-M., Lazarovici Gh. 2007, 135.

¹²⁰ Hașotti 1997, 81.

¹²¹ Kovács 2013-2014, 73.

¹²² Berciu 1961, 169, fig. 37, 41.

¹²³ Lazarovici C.-M., Lazarovici Gh. 2007, 74.

¹²⁴ Lazarovici C.-M., Lazarovici Gh. 2007, 131.

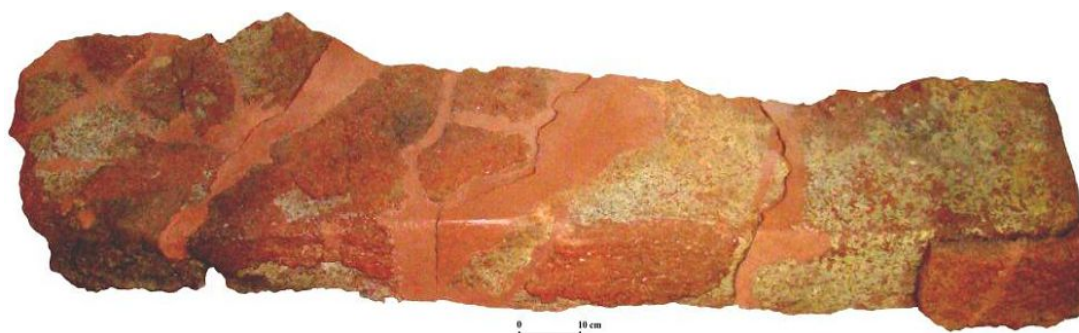


Fig. 23. The bench found at Poduri, after restoration, displayed at the Cucuteni Eneolithic Art Museum in Piatra Neamț (after Preoteasa 2013, 109, fig. 22).

Building 12 at Târpești, Neamț County, had three rooms, each with a bench inside, placed along the walls¹²⁵. Others, also made of clay, are mentioned at Berești - *Dealul Bulgarului*, Galați County, with a piece of furniture preserved on the long side of the semi-circular pit-house¹²⁶. Several clay benches are mentioned at Ruginoasa, Iași County¹²⁷. In Pit-house 8 the bench was made of two large stones, located in the north-eastern corner¹²⁸. The case is similar to the one of Hoisești, Iași County, where Dwelling 3, composed of two rooms, had a bench installed in the larger one, between an oven and a hearth¹²⁹.

Dwelling 2 at Soloncenii II had four rooms. Rectangular benches were found in the first and third chamber, made of clay, with rounded edges. Near the benches and below them there were ceramic fragments and grinding stones¹³⁰.

House 57 at Poduri, Cucuteni B₁ layer (Bacău County) is a special case because of the association of the bench with a cross-shaped clay hearth and three other objects representing stylized bucrania/consecration horns made of clay. The bench was taken and preserved at the Cucuteni Eneolithic Art Museum in Piatra Neamț (Fig. 23). An impressive number of hearths was found inside: five rectangular hearths, of which one was on the upper floor and four on the ground-floor, as well as a circular one, a possible oven (ground-floor)¹³¹. Most hearths in the sanctuary have a special inventory beneath, as a result of foundation rituals¹³².

The site of Trușești - *Țuguieța* (Botoșani County) is important from several points of view. We take into account the situations where large clay idols were set up on columns¹³³. The sanctuaries of the site were

¹²⁵ Marinescu-Bilcu 1981.

¹²⁶ Dragomir 1985, 94.

¹²⁷ Lazarovici C.-M., Lazarovici Gh. 2012.

¹²⁸ Lazarovici C.-M., Lazarovici Gh. 2012, 106-107.

¹²⁹ Lazarovici C.-M. et alii 2009, 39.

¹³⁰ Chitic 2008, 286; Lazarovici C.-M. et alii 2009, 38.

¹³¹ Preoteasa 2012, 78.

¹³² Preoteasa 2013, 91-114.

¹³³ Petrescu-Dîmbovița 1999; Kovács 2015, Pl. 12/1; Pl. 13/1.

categorized, based on their general characteristics and features from the inside, into two categories¹³⁴: with one room (L.24, L.38, L.40, L.60)¹³⁵ and with two rooms, equal or unequal (L.61 from the first habitational stage, and L.84 for the second stage)¹³⁶. Religious buildings and the inner inventory were already presented and carefully described, both the inventory and monumental statues¹³⁷.

One of the most famous monumental statues in the Cucuteni Culture was discovered in L.XXIV (L.24)¹³⁸. Cornelia-Magda Lazarovici made a first reconstruction of the context described in reports by placing the objects in the areas shown by the original plans¹³⁹. The monumental altar presents two anthropomorphic characters, stylized, and united in the thorax area¹⁴⁰. The discoverer's opinion is that the object would be "a temple facade"¹⁴¹, representing a divine couple¹⁴², later interpreted as a pair of goddesses¹⁴³.

In front of the monumental statue there was a very damaged altar, along with traces of a bench or table¹⁴⁴. It is possible that on that table or bench offerings were placed for the two deities. A small bench was mentioned in L.61, a community building with two rooms¹⁴⁵, in which two altar tables were discovered¹⁴⁶. The two circular idols with hollowed chalices might have been located at a certain distance from the ground if they were placed on poles¹⁴⁷. The breasts are modelled only on one of the idols, which could suggest a male-female couple¹⁴⁸.

A possible stone bench is mentioned at Scânteia, in building L1. This particular building had a special and spectacular inventory, composed of 75 anthropomorphic idols, of which 59 are female, 10 are males and six are indeterminate, 30 zoomorphic idols, 7 zoomorphic protomes, one fragment from an anthropomorphic vessel, 1 copper needle, fragments from an altar-table, a fragment from a skull, a large quantity of pottery and flint tools, along with a clay tablet with incised signs on a surface¹⁴⁹. An arrangement

¹³⁴ Lazarovici C.-M. 2004, 53.

¹³⁵ Petrescu-Dîmbovița et alii 1999, 67, fig. 46-48; 85-88, 526, fig. 65 and 167; 88-89, fig. 67; 117-121, fig. 86-87, 372/3.

¹³⁶ Petrescu-Dîmbovița 1999, 121, fig. 88; 160, fig. 116, 147/5, 165/8, 170/14, 175/2, 313/4; Maxim-Kalmar, Tarcea 1999, 670.

¹³⁷ Gimbutas 1984, 77, fig. 43; Monah, Cucuș 1985, 156; Sandars 1985, 201; Lazarovici C.-M. 2004, 47-49, fig. 1; Monah 1997, 37-38, n. 72.

¹³⁸ Monah 1997, 37, n. 72.

¹³⁹ Lazarovici C.-M. 2004, 47.

¹⁴⁰ Lazarovici C.-M. et alii 2009, 57.

¹⁴¹ Petrescu-Dîmbovița et alii 1999, 529.

¹⁴² Dumitrescu Vl. 1974, 78-79.

¹⁴³ Monah 1997, 212.

¹⁴⁴ Petrescu-Dîmbovița 1999, 67, fig. 48.

¹⁴⁵ Petrescu-Dîmbovița et alii 1999, 121, fig. 88.

¹⁴⁶ Maxim-Kalmar, Tarcea 1999, 670; Kovács 2015, Pl. 12/1.

¹⁴⁷ Lazarovici C.-M., Lazarovici Gh. 2008, 13; Lazarovici C.-M. et alii 2009, 61.

¹⁴⁸ Lazarovici C.-M. et alii 2009, 63.

¹⁴⁹ Lazarovici C.-M. et alii 2009, 63-64.

that stands out is the stella or bench measuring 75 x 50cm with a relatively anthropomorphic shape found inside, near the hearth¹⁵⁰. The association of several mobile objects, specific to rituals, along with fixed elements, possibly anthropomorphic, like the stone bench or stella, all lead to the idea of a domestic altar.

The bench as a presentation support for statuettes, playing the role of an altar, is quite rarely observed in practice. Several contexts were mentioned in Neolithic sites at Nea Nikomedeia¹⁵¹, Achilleion (on the bench the following items were deposited as offerings: a “pregnant“ figurine, 5 statuettes, two axes and cca. 400 blades) and at Căscioarele¹⁵². What we observe in this discussion is that the altar can take many forms, depending on the specific ritual activity that takes place at a particular moment inside the building. Sometimes the bench can act as an altar if it supports statuettes, and it becomes worship object and place for display of cult items, as in the case of Sabatinovka¹⁵³. In the case of Tangâru, the bench might have been used as a base for the monumental anthropomorphic idol, the main cult object from the building¹⁵⁴, a situation similar to the one found in L1 at Hârșova¹⁵⁵.

THE BENCH IN SANCTUARIES: TYPES, SHAPES, DISTRIBUTION

Considering the typology of the benches in sanctuaries, we took into account both the typical shapes, mostly geometric, and those less common or not so widely spread. Of course the typology will be enriched over time, if we come to know new types. For the bench we have identified nine types, divided into three main categories, considering the geometric shapes: rectangular, square and semicircular (Fig. 24). The first category, named type A, the rectangular benches include: simple bench (A1), the bench displaying horns inside or embedded bucrania (A2) and rectangular bench that comes as an extension on a column (A3).

¹⁵⁰ Chirica et alii 1999, 13; Lazarovici C.-M. 2004, 51; Lazarovici C.-M., Lazarovici Gh. 2007, 229, fig. Vd.87.

¹⁵¹ Mellaart 1975, 249; Rutkovski 1986, 154-156, 167, fig. 206.

¹⁵² Dumitrescu Vl. 1974, 478; Gimbutas 1984, 71, fig. 24.

¹⁵³ Kovács 2010, 86.

¹⁵⁴ Berciu 1961, 420-421; Lazarovici C.-M., Lazarovici Gh. 2007, 136-137, fig.Vc. 76, 76/b.

¹⁵⁵ Andreescu 2002, 15; Hașotti 1997, 80-81.

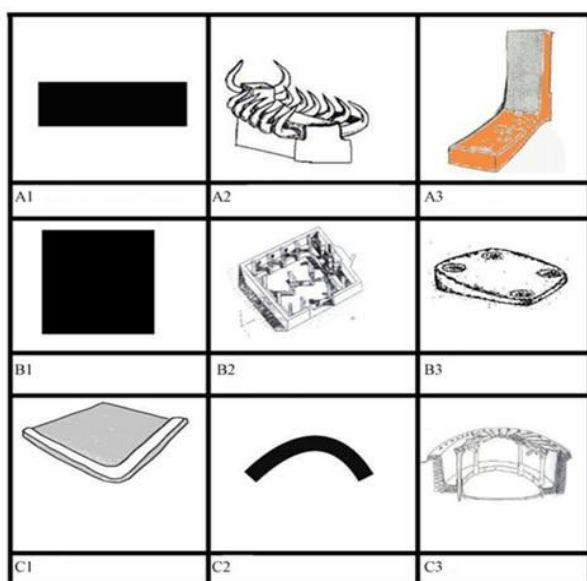


Fig. 24. Typology of benches.

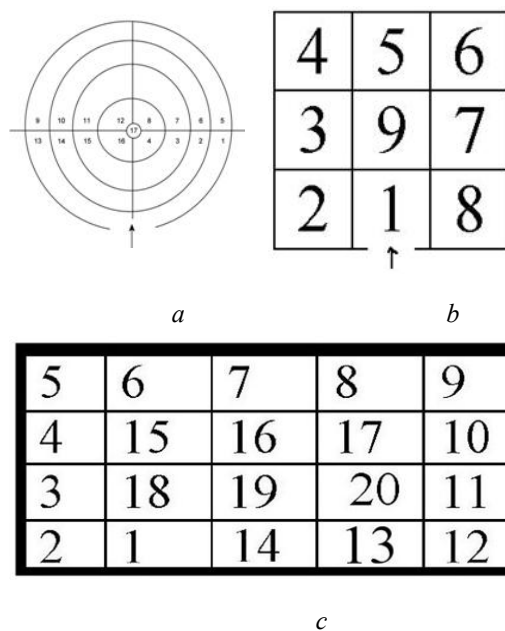


Fig. 25 a, b, c. The cassettes used to identify the place of fixed and mobile parts found in circular buildings (a), square buildings (b), and rectangular buildings (c).

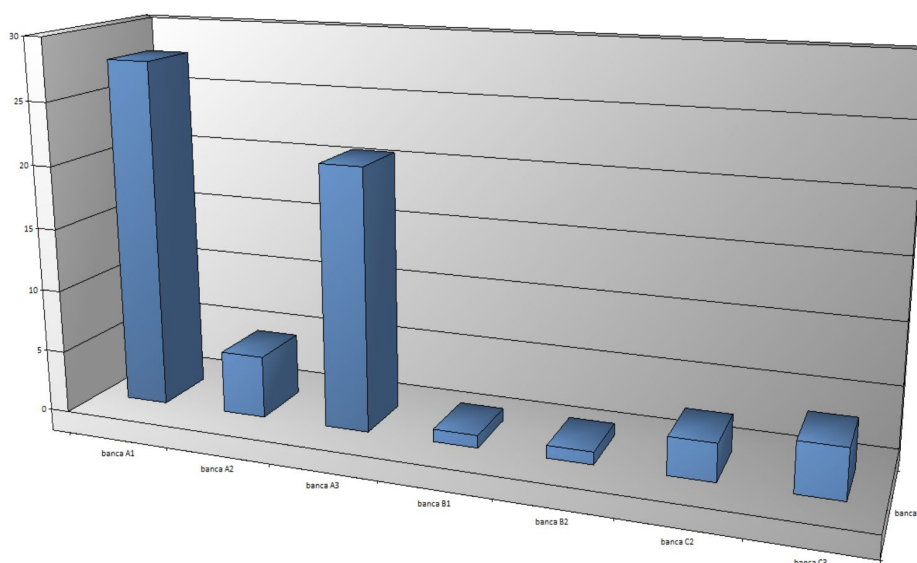


Fig. 26. Frequency graphic of the bench types.

A second category, named B, includes square simple benches (B1), rectangular benches inside the building, along the walls (B2) and low square bench (like a podium or small platform), using sometimes different decorative techniques or integrated functional elements (B3). C1 type is a rectangular, large-size bench, with the appearance of a platform, delimited by a raised curb. In C2 category are framed semi-circular

benches and C3 type is actually a variant of C2 benches, but with a more elaborate shape, and it is located along the walls of the semicircular building.

We introduced the Neolithic benches in a database. In this stage we have 65 records from 27 sites and 54 buildings. First we wanted to see which is the most frequently used type of bench. The rectangular type with rounded or right edges is one of the most widespread (A1 appeared in more than 25 cases).

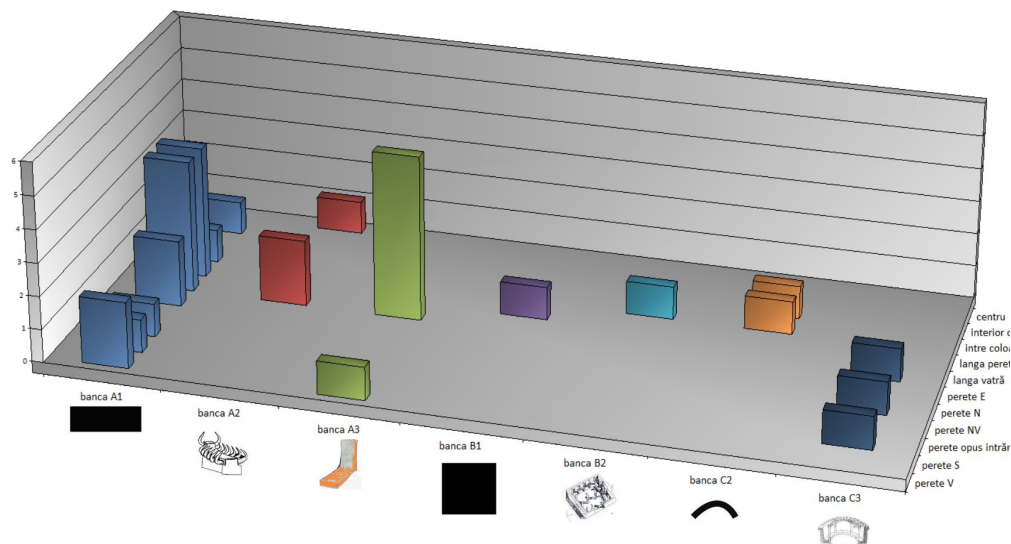


Fig. 27. The correlation between types of benches with locations inside buildings.

An A3 type of bench is second as frequency of use, but this is a particular case, which occurs in Çatalhöyük and one in Parța. This type is not widespread, but the large number of benches is motivated by the fact that the excavated buildings within this site are numerous. Benches of type C are specific to buildings of PPN, and they do not occur frequently, but they are spread in all PPN sites. Type B2 is adapted to circular stone buildings in Anatolia and the Near East, specific to the PPN culture (Fig. 26).

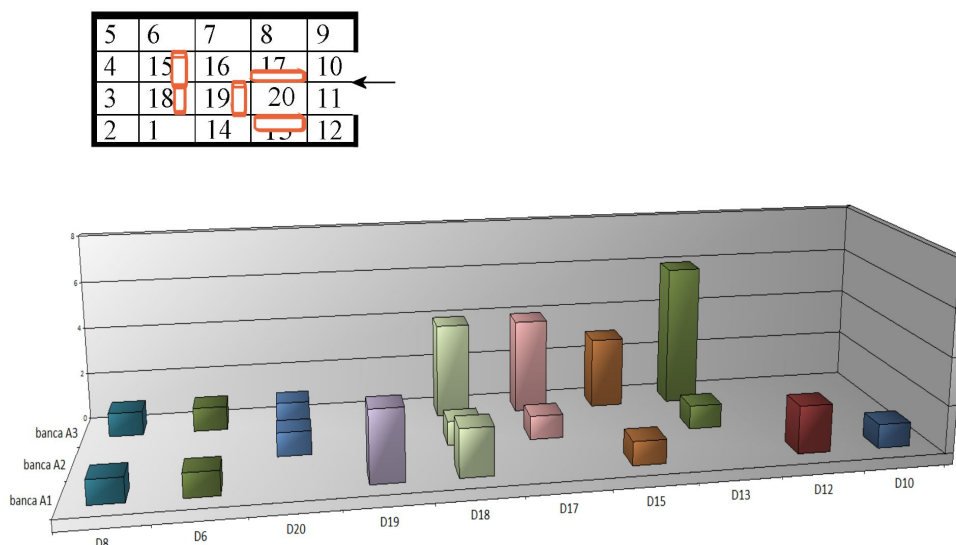


Fig. 28. The places preferred for placing the rectangular benches (type A) in rectangular buildings.

Considering the location inside the buildings, we noticed a certain pattern. We correlated the types of benches with the walls and their position. We could see that the simple rectangular bench is most often connected with the hearth, or the eastern wall. Bench A2 is a particular case, as it is placed either against on the eastern wall, or in the central area of the building. Bench B2 is specific to rectangular sanctuaries, and it is always placed between columns (Fig. 27).

We classified the buildings into three major types, considering the plan (rectangular buildings – type D, square buildings – type P and circular buildings – type C), so we can track the position of fixed and mobile inventory found inside (Fig. 25 /a, b, c). One can observe that most rectangular benches (type A1), are associated with rectangular type buildings, designated as type D. Usually, preferred places were on the side walls, in a protected area (cassettes D17 and D13). Another preferred location is the one opposite to the entrance, in front of it, in cassettes D15-D18 (Fig. 28).

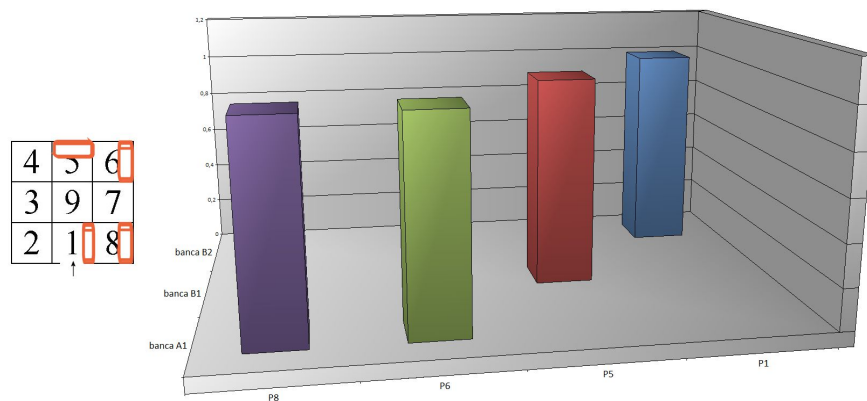


Fig. 29. Preferred location of the bench inside square buildings.

The type A2 bench is a special one, because there is no viable utility, unlike the other types, which could have had also some household functions. This type of bench is itself an altar, considering the manner of its making, in an analysis and we can hardly compare this one to other similar elements.

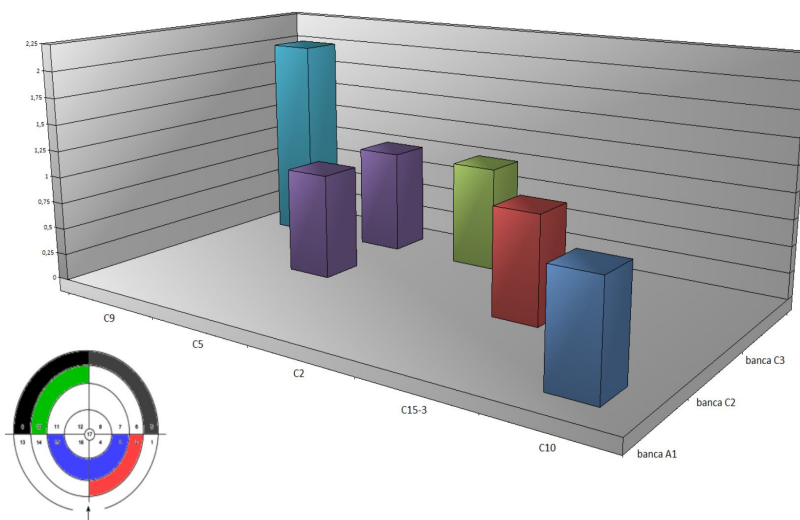


Fig. 30. Chart showing the location of the bench in circular buildings.

Square buildings (type P) are rarely used by communities for cultural purposes. However, introducing the limited data we have so far, it resulted that the favourite place for setting the bench is the corner opposite to the entrance (P5, P6, P8). Another place where the bench was located is near the door, on one side, in P1 box. In this case we consider that the central space was preserved for other features (Fig. 29).

In case of circular buildings (type C) the line of the inner walls (C9 place is most frequently used, and cassette C5 is used for the other two types of benches, namely types C2 and C3) is preferred. There are no situations where the central space is occupied by this element; we noticed a clear tendency to leave open the central space for the construction of a support pole (Fig. 30).

DECORATION, SIGNS AND SYMBOLS ON BENCHES

Starting with the earliest aceramic neolithic sanctuaries, different decoration techniques were used, either for aesthetic purposes, or to send a message towards the viewer. The bench in building EA53 at Jerf el Ahmar (Syria) has limestone front slabs, skilfully cut on the edge, then polished so that they form a frieze of triangles in low-relief¹⁵⁶.

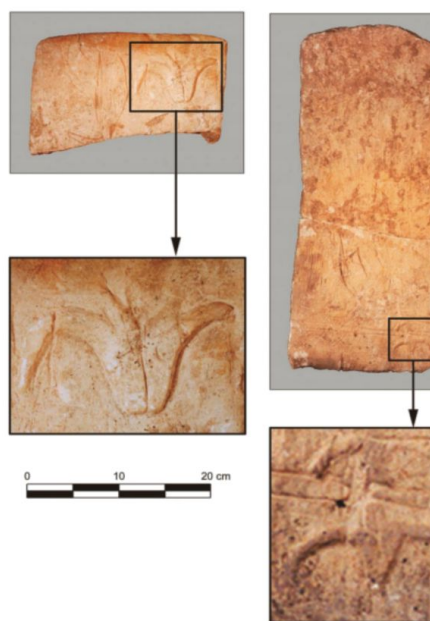


Fig. 31. Tell 'Abr 3. Stone slabs with bull bucrania made in relief, without a stratigraphic context (after Yartah 2013, II, 140, fig. 124).



Fig. 32. Detail image: the slab with gazelles at Tell 'Abr 3 (after Yartah 2013, II, 136, fig. 120).

Even though the bench is framed by columns, the decor is not interrupted, the columns themselves having some rectangular friezes in low-relief on the visible surface¹⁵⁷ (Fig. 1). The site of Tell 'Abr 3 is distinctive by the drawings and reliefs made on the front slabs delimiting the benches. Each tile shows different patterns and there are not two identical slabs. Here one of the earliest representations in low-relief of a bucranium occurs, unfortunately without a stratigraphic context¹⁵⁸ (Fig. 31). The representations are made with engraved lines, presenting parallel zig-zags and the silhouette of an animal (a goat or possibly a gazelle)¹⁵⁹(Fig. 32).

¹⁵⁶ Stordeur et alii 2000, 37-38.

¹⁵⁷ Stordeur 2000, 3.

¹⁵⁸ Yartah 2004, 153, fig. 15.

¹⁵⁹ Yartah 2004, 149, fig. 10.

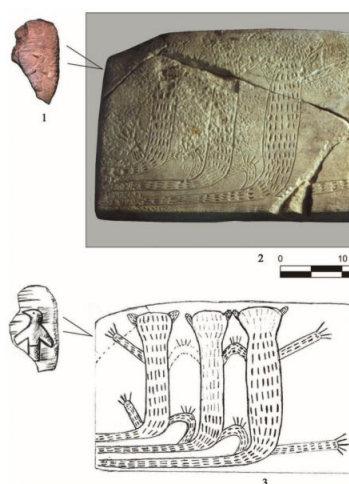


Fig. 33. Groups of panthers on the tiles of the bench (after Yartah 2013, 138, fig. 122).



Fig. 34. Zig-zags on the decorated bench in building O75, Wadi Faynan 16 site, PPNA in southern Jordan (after Mithen et alii 2011, 359, fig. 7).

Also, zoomorphic motifs were identified, possibly felines or panthers, sometimes grouped, with the head towards the upper side of the bench, in natural position. The felines are rendered by the artist as seen from above, with legs apart and tails curved to the left. The bodies were decorated with small incisions and, in considering linear decoration grouped in bands, the discoverers deduced that panthers were represented (Fig. 33).

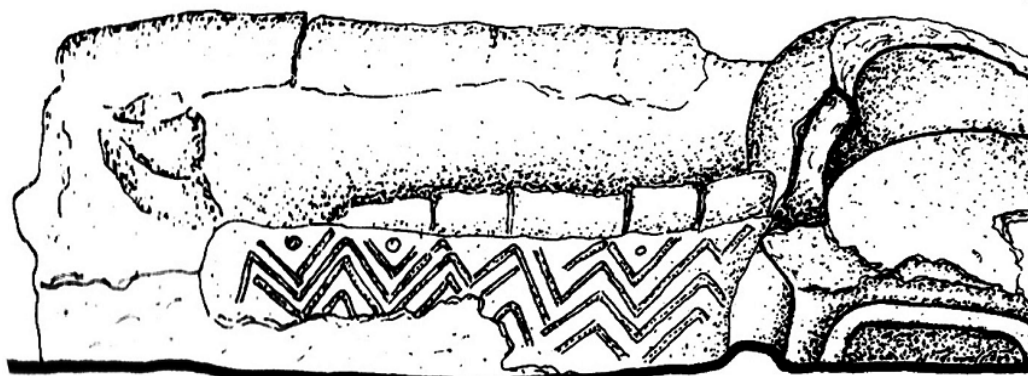


Fig. 35. Decorated bench from Zelenikovo (after Naumov 2011, 16, fig. 2/c).

One of the panthers, interpreted as male, has a robust waist, whereas the thinner one could be a female. The paws of the animals show an interesting detail: they are joint as if the animals were in contact¹⁶⁰. Another zoomorphic element, quite widespread during the Neolithic, is the fox. One of the earliest is the one

¹⁶⁰ Yartah 2004, 146.

presented on columns of Göbekli Tepe and engraved on slabs at Jerf el Ahmar. Regarding the fox representation, there are many questions, given that the fox is not a ferocious animal¹⁶¹. Even if made in similar manner, the images carved on the slabs of PPN sanctuaries, display some stylistic differences. If at Jerf el Ahmar birds of prey are preferred, for Tell 'Abr 3 panthers are distinctive. On the bench of building EA100 in Jerf el Ahmar two headless bodies are drawn¹⁶². Associated with the stone slabs and embedded in the bench, there are two stellas, of 1m height, representing images of raptors, drawn with a high artistic sense¹⁶³. The bench of Göbekli Tepe is individualised by the female image and the execution manner¹⁶⁴.

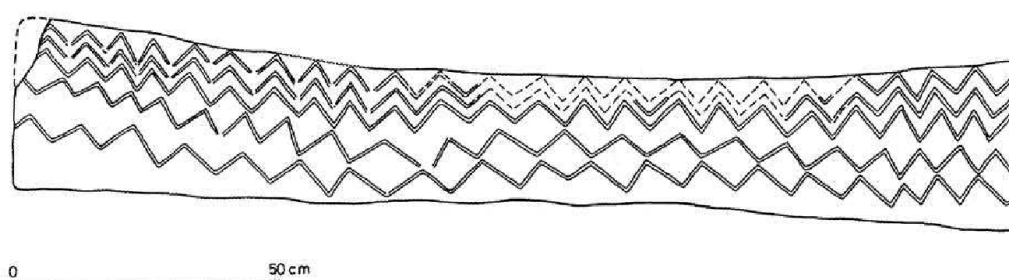


Fig. 36. Decorated kerb of an oven found at Slatina-Sofia (after Nikolov 2011, 136, fig. 1).

The water-pattern or repetitive zig-zag occurs in the cult buildings, starting with the earliest benches of community buildings. Jerf el Ahmar is one of these sites, but we find the pattern on a bench of Wadi Faynan 16, a PPNA site in southern Jordan¹⁶⁵ (Fig. 34). Several buildings of the European Neolithic have specific decorations on the walls or various other parts¹⁶⁶, but for the topic under discussion worth mentioning is the decorated bench of Zelenikovo, Macedonia (Fig. 35). This one has a pattern made of grouped incised chevrons¹⁶⁷.

The decor made of horizontal strips, with multiple zig-zags, is visible also on an oven kerb in Slatina, Sofia (Bulgaria), Early Neolithic, located in a worship building (Fig. 36). Near the oven there were three circular columns and an offering pit. Along with the structural components, which are particularly interesting, there was platform which was raised to 25-30cm above the floor, associated with a decorated column¹⁶⁸.

Another remarkable zig-zag pattern in a cult building is the one at Vrbjanska Čuka (Macedonia), reconstructed in the Prilep Museum. The monumental altar was placed against the north-western wall of the

¹⁶¹ Stordeur 2010, 124.

¹⁶² Stordeur, Abbès 2002, 575, fig. 4.

¹⁶³ Özdoğan 2007, 61.

¹⁶⁴ Meskell 2011, 255.

¹⁶⁵ Finlayson et alii 2011, 8183–8188.

¹⁶⁶ Kovács 2015, 217.

¹⁶⁷ Naumov 2011, 17.

¹⁶⁸ Nikolov 2001, 133-138; 135.

building, in a dedicated area. The attention is drawn by the massive relief moulding, placed diagonally from the bottom up on the wall, with triangular corners and zigzags in the middle of the wall surface¹⁶⁹. A similar relief decoration started from the base of the wall façade, the south-eastern part of the sanctuary, having a garment that surrounded the entrance¹⁷⁰.

Wavy lines or the zig-zagged ones are difficult to interpret because, although we see the sign, it is difficult to assign it a specific meaning. These waves could represent several concepts, such as rain, burnt offering (fumigatio) for a deity (holocaust), but equally interesting is the assumption that they depict the water as a primary element, or serpent, a symbol of wisdom. In the Middle East there appeared the earliest sign made in such manner, on a “clay bread”¹⁷¹. The water, the fire, the air and the earth are essential elements, belonging to the primordial world¹⁷². Many worldwide mythologies refer to the birth of the world from a symbiosis of meteoric fire, water, air and earth¹⁷³.

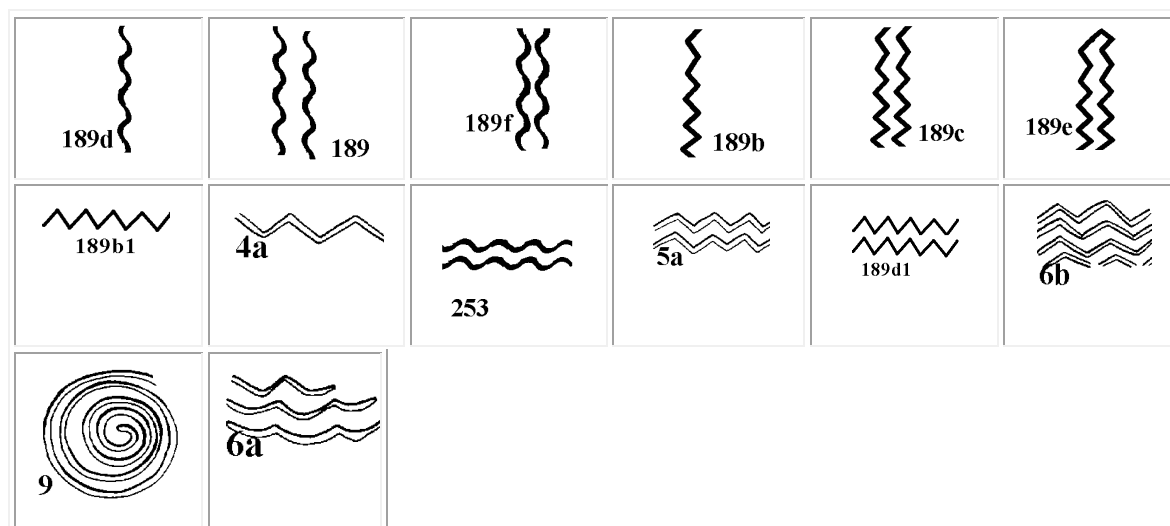




FIG. 37. CODES REPRESENTING WAVY LINES (CATALOGUE GH. LAZAROVICI).

Generally we see that strips made of several wavy lines  or  or zig-zags convey the image of water and abundance (Fig. 37). The meander sign represented water, snake or smoke. Most times these signs get additional clarification, appearing in various combinations, specifying the meaning of the sign. This

¹⁶⁹ Jovanović et alii 1990, 109.

¹⁷⁰ *Makedonski kulturno...* 2008, 36-37.

¹⁷¹ Makkay 1984, fig. 18/2a.

¹⁷² Lazarovici Gh. 2015, 39.

¹⁷³ Kramer 1962.

kind of decoration on fixed parts of some buildings is linked with a symbolic behaviour in buildings, which prove a strong social component, most likely being a gathering place for some community members¹⁷⁴.

Painting, although it is often found on sanctuaries' walls, doesn't necessarily decorate other fixed elements inside them. Painting on the benches is seen in very few cases. However, Çatalhöyük is a special case. Paintings are frequently found on the front and side parts of benches. Traces of red paint were identified in many cases; unfortunately not always the pattern was reconstructed and represented, as in the case of Space 227, adjacent to Building 47. The bench was covered with the same type of plaster as the one used on the walls. Both the wall and the bench had paint on at least one of the restored layers of plaster. The upper side of the bench was decorated with small steps of less than one centimeter in height, facing west. Red paint is visible on the sides of the vertical steps¹⁷⁵. South of the bucranium, along with the bench and probably part of it, were discovered three cattle horn cores that were placed around the bucranium¹⁷⁶.

Building 49 draws attention by the extensive use of paint on the visible sides of the bench. Bench F.1651, with a high kerb, was built on the eastern edge of the platform. The southern area of the platform was decorated with a layer of fine white plaster, on which a pattern made by hand was visible (Fig. 38).



Fig. 38. The edge of platform from Building 49 (after Eddisford 2008, 33, fig. 18).

A circular cutout on the side of the bench F.1651, filled with brown clay later on, was interpreted as a pole or a hole made for an arrangement associated with the bench (Fig. 39). The perforation was sealed with

¹⁷⁴ Naumov 2011, 17.

¹⁷⁵ Bogdan 2004.

¹⁷⁶ Twiss et alii 2005, 125.

several layers of white plaster. During the first phase the painting was made with vertical lines, whereas the second phase had a decor which included figurative motifs¹⁷⁷.



Fig. 39. Çatal Höyük Abstract design on a side of bench F.1651 in Building 49 (after Eddisford 2008, 33, fig. 19).

The fact that very similar painting patterns appear (as in the case of Building 80 with shrine VI.A.50 discovered by Mellaart¹⁷⁸) inside buildings found at some distance in the same site and in different groups of houses, leads to the idea that there were some networks for spreading the social and ritual ideas within the same community, an aspect visible also in other data collected so far¹⁷⁹. Red paint at Çatalhöyük is frequently used in various situations, including walls or figurative mouldings, on bulls' heads or anthropomorphic representations¹⁸⁰, but yellow¹⁸¹, brown or black paint¹⁸² is also documented.

¹⁷⁷ Eddisford 2008, 33.

¹⁷⁸ Mellaart 1964, 43, fig. 4.

¹⁷⁹ Hodder 2011, 2.

¹⁸⁰ Kovács 2015, 42.

¹⁸¹ Mellaart 1964, 44, fig. 5, pl. IIb; Mellaart 1963, 62, fig. 8; Mellaart 1964, 43, fig. 4.

¹⁸² Mellaart 1963, pl. Va; Mellaart 1964, pl. XIIa, b; 65, fig. 20.

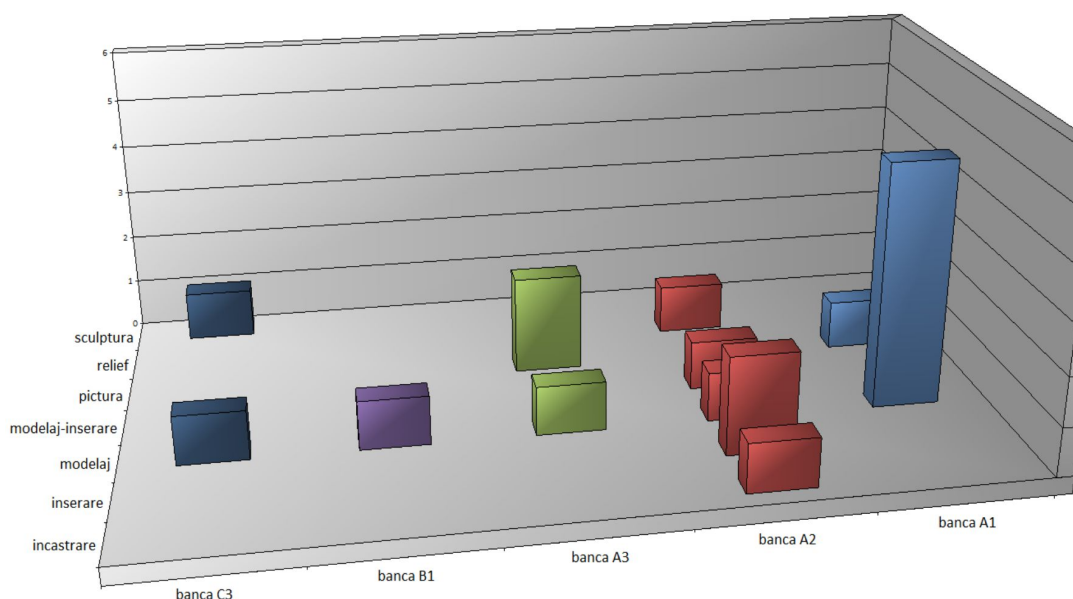


Fig. 40. The association between types of benches and decoration techniques.

We searched the correlation between types of benches and decorative techniques. We introduced modelling too, although it is not a decorative technique itself. The type A1 bench shows only simple modelling in most cases, without elaborate artistic features. Various decorative techniques were used on the type A2 benches, considering the complexity and technical associations, such as embedding or over-modelling of horns. The sculpture is used for benches C3 and A2, while the relief technique can be found on benches of type A1 and A3 (Fig. 40).

THE MINIATURE BENCH

Benches appear in several miniature buildings, in which various items of furniture or inventory were preserved. These miniature buildings are important because, no matter what they represent, models of houses or shrines/temples, they provide several important data concerning the buildings, such as the construction method or the interior equipment¹⁸³. The miniature found at Anzabegovo, Macedonia, shows fixed elements such as an oven with two horns, a mat in front of the entrance, on the right side a box for cereals and a small bench¹⁸⁴.

Models of miniature furniture, including benches, small stools or chairs with backrests were found in cultures of Southeast Europe. Various types of chairs are identified at Dikili Tash, Bulgaria, a deep armchair

¹⁸³ Lazarovici Gh., Lazarovici C.-M. 2010, 99; Boghian 2004, 215.

¹⁸⁴ Lazarovici Gh., Lazarovici C.-M. 2010, 101.

at Galabnik, Bulgaria (culture Karanovo I-III) and a chair with a figurine placed on top at Topolnica, Serbia (Vinča culture), representing certainly prototypes for normal size objects¹⁸⁵.



Fig. 41. The house model from Platia Magula Zarkou, Greece (after Bailey 2005, 70, fig. 7.13).

The model from Platia Magula Zarkou, Greece, placed as a foundation offering of a building, completes the register of finds from the Neolithic Balkans with other details (Fig. 41). The main character is a woman, possibly a priestess, lying down on a small bench. Her rank is emphasized both by the large size compared to the other characters, as well as by the striped incised decoration on the bell-shaped dress¹⁸⁶. Miniature benches are also placed in two small building models found in Popudnja and Šušková (Fig. 42)¹⁸⁷. These two cases are special considering the vessels, the inventory, and the association between benches and cross-shaped hearths¹⁸⁸.

¹⁸⁵ Marangou, Grammenos 2005, 18.

¹⁸⁶ Lazarovici Gh., Lazarovici C.-M. 2010, 101.

¹⁸⁷ Monah 1997, 46, fig. 11/1.

¹⁸⁸ Kovács 2010a, 26, fig. VI/1, 2, 4.

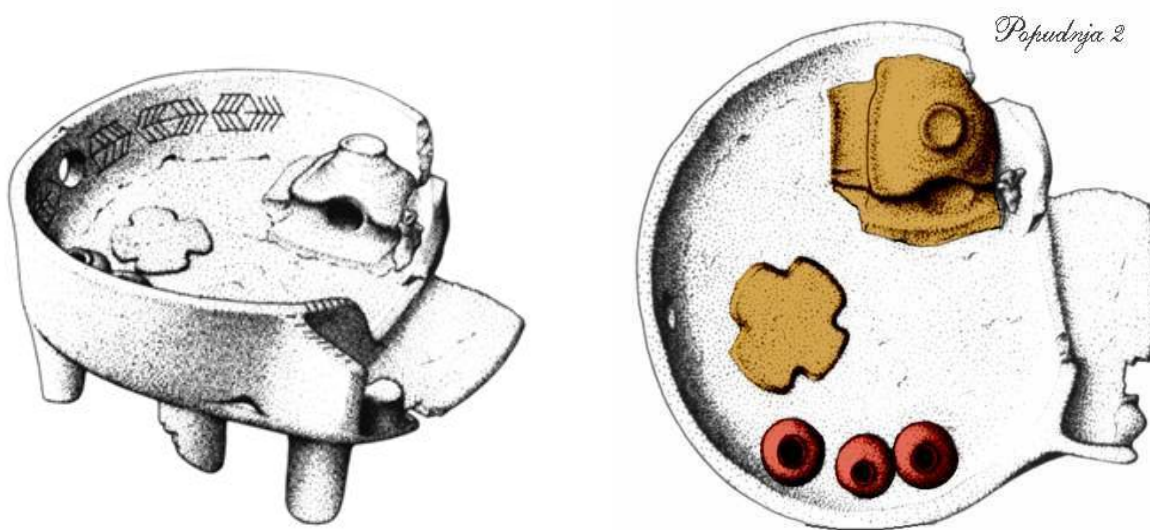


Fig. 42. House model from Popudnja, Ukraine (after Lazarovici C-M. 2004, 7, Fig. 15).

It should be noted that there are many statues and statuettes which were modeled in a sitting position; some are associated with benches or chairs. Some objects found at Târpești, Neamț County, Romania are quite interesting, considering the separate discovery of the miniatures, without a small house. There were found two pieces: a „small tray” with a modelled seat inside, both the tray and the seat ended with protomes like small horns on the upper side, discovered in House 5¹⁸⁹ and the „miniature couch” with backrest¹⁹⁰.

The miniature couch was restored and reconstructed with five female characters sitting on it at the Cucuteni Neolithic Art Museum from Piatra-Neamț (Fig. 43). The object has relatively rectangular shape with rounded corners, and the backrest is with five protuberances in the shape of small horns, arranged symmetrically¹⁹¹.

Although they are not individual benches, we must mention the so-called „vessels with inner threshold”. The shape of the vessel is not a very popular one considering the Cucuteni ceramic register. So far there are three vessels of this kind found at Vorniceni - *Pod Ibăneasa*, Botoșani County, and a bowl from Ripiceni - *Holm* (Cucuteni A-B). The inner thresholds resemble in a certain way the small altars from Ghelăiești - *Nedeia*¹⁹², but the forms are completely different. One of the complete vessels, discovered at Vorniceni, had inside the lower half of a fragmented statuette (Fig. 46).

¹⁸⁹ Marinescu-Bîlcu 1981, fig. 102/1; fig. 113/10.

¹⁹⁰ Marinescu-Bîlcu 1981, fig. 102/3; fig. 113/15.

¹⁹¹ Dumitroaia et alii 2011, 151, position 171.

¹⁹² Cucoș 1993, 59-80; 61-62, fig. 3/6a.



Fig. 43. Miniature couch from Târpești, restored (Cucuteni Neolithic Art Museum from Piatra Neamț).

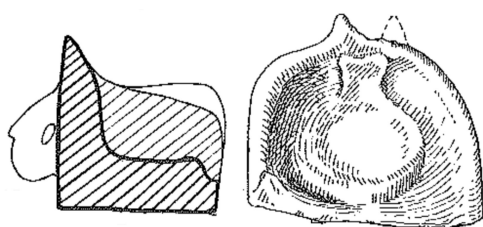


Fig. 44. The “tray” with chair placed inside found in Dwelling 5 at Târpești (after Marinescu Bîlcu 1981, fig. 113/10).

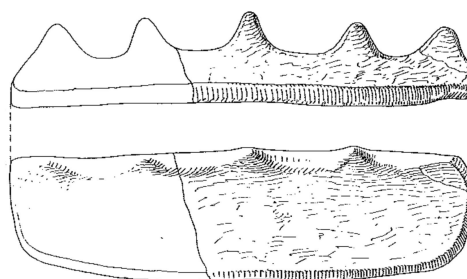


Fig. 45. „Miniature couch” with backrest (after Marinescu Bîlcu 1981, fig. 113/15).

The vessel has a shoulder with a careen, and on the outside, barely perceptible, there is a side handle, perforated horizontally in the maximum diameter line. The vessel's wall goes down sharply inward, making a threshold¹⁹³. In the same register of miniature benches there is a vessel, unpublished so far, found in Pit 43 at Vorniceni¹⁹⁴.

¹⁹³ Diaconescu 2007, 10; Diaconescu 2003, 6, fig. 2.

¹⁹⁴ Informations kindly provided by archaeologist Maria Diaconescu, to whom we send our thanks.



Fig. 46. Vorniceni, feminine statuette found inside the "vessel with a threshold" (photo M. Diaconescu, 31.03.2016).



Fig. 47. Vessel with small bench inside found in pit 43 at Vorniceni (photo M. Diaconescu, 31.03.2016).

Even if the vessel was discovered in a fragmentary state, we can see that on the inner threshold there are one socket fully preserved and another, partially preserved (Fig. 47). It is possible that these sockets were shaped in this way as to allow statuettes to be fixed in a sitting position, certainly more than one, placed in the same container.

CONCLUSIONS

Temples and community sanctuaries require a specific architecture and inner arrangement, different from the dwellings of the settlement. Most times, although the building is not different through exterior features, several cultural elements, like monumental statues or mobile inventory can be related to the religious life of the community¹⁹⁵.

The altar can take various forms, depending on the specific ritual activity performed at, a particular moment inside the building. Thus we can see that there are ritual hearths, which were made in a shape different from the usual ones in the buildings (a cross-shaped hearth from Poduri¹⁹⁶ or an oval hearth with special inventory in the Buznea sanctuary¹⁹⁷, to mention just a few of them). The bench in the sanctuary can act as an altar when it is a support for statuettes, becoming object of worship and display for religious objects,

¹⁹⁵ Kovács 2010, 88.

¹⁹⁶ Dumitroaia et alii 2009, 21.

¹⁹⁷ Mihai, Boghian 1985, 429-452.

as in the Sabatinovka case¹⁹⁸. Household altars are more difficult to identify, but they occur in some domestic contexts, presenting specific characteristics¹⁹⁹.

The bench in sanctuaries has two purposes. One is for display of idols, or support of statues/statuettes. Often found in special buildings, the bench doesn't have functional purposes, such as a spot for sitting or sleeping, being too small for such purposes, or it is far too decorated to be of strictly functional uses. It is more plausible that on the narrow bench various mobile objects were located.

Sometimes the platform, or the bench, made of stone or clay, was covered with wood plank and located near the wall. An example of this kind was found at Dolnoslav (Bulgaria, Karanovo VI culture - Gumelnița). The clay bench was placed against the wall and on it several small phalloi were placed²⁰⁰. At Pietrele-Măgura Gorgana, Gumelnița culture, the bench was used as a support to display seven consecration horns/stylised bucrania made of clay, along with a pot filled with grain flour²⁰¹. In the case of the cult building at Căscioarele, Boian-Spanțov culture²⁰², the bench is associated with two painted columns and numerous querns²⁰³.

There is a frequent association between the bench and the hearth. Most often rectangular clay benches are positioned in spaces protected against the cold or the wind. The most frequent position is the one against the eastern wall, excepting the benches with horns embedded, which have a central position inside the buildings, but this one has no practical meaning, and it is an altar itself.

Various art forms are often used to decorate buildings or worship objects. The arrangements for implementing the decor, its size and opulence, are all directly related to the community welfare or the desire of ostentation, but also with the image that a specific community has about its own gods²⁰⁴.

The bench assumes a communal activity, by concentrating people at a certain time in a certain space. Apart from the examples we reviewed, we must ask ourselves how many of the prehistoric world benches were made of wood or other perishable materials, so that no traces have reached us.

¹⁹⁸ Markević 1960, 282, 290, fig. 1; Gimbutas 1984, 74; Gimbutas 1991, 261, fig.7-59-a-b; Monah 1997, 35; 255, fig. 3-1.

¹⁹⁹ Lazarovici C.-M., Lazarovici Gh. 2006b, 111-115.

²⁰⁰ Bánffy 1990-1991, 207.

²⁰¹ Berciu 1956, 507-511, fig.16a, 512, fig. 29/1; Lazarovici C.-M., Lazarovici Gh. 2007, 144, fig. Vc.87/b.

²⁰² Dumitrescu H. 1968, 381-390; Lazarovici C.-M., Lazarovici Gh. 2007, 131, fig. Vc.68.

²⁰³ Dumitrescu H. 1968.

²⁰⁴ Ferguson 1983, 185.

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SULTANA UND HOTNITSA – ZWEI SIEDLUNGEN AN BEIDEN UFERN DER DONAU

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Stichwort: *Sultana, Hotnitsa, Komplex KGK VI*

Ursache für diesen Beitrag ist der Vortrag der in Sultana forschenden rumänischen Kollegen, der bei der internationalen Tagung in Peshtera 2009 gehalten wurde¹. Damals bin ich von den vielen Ähnlichkeiten zwischen den beiden Hügeln, Sultana und Hotnitsa, beeindruckt worden, die sowohl Artefakte als auch Fragestellungen betreffen. Diese Ähnlichkeiten fehlen bei den Hotnitsa benachbarten Hügeln – eine unumstrittene Tatsache, die zusätzlich zu dieser Gegenüberstellung anregt.

In der Forschungsgeschichte beider Hügel erkennen wir eine frühe Phase der Forschung², auf die ein längerer, fast ein halbes Jahrhundert dauernder, Hiatus folgt, nach dem die archäologischen Ausgrabungen wieder unternommen werden. Wenige Hügel mit einer solchen Geschichte können aufgezählt werden – offensichtlich waren die ersten Ergebnisse bedeutend und wurden von der nächsten Generation Archäologen entsprechend bewertet, damit die Forschungen wieder unternommen werden.

Beide Hügel beeindrucken nicht durch ihre Größe, aber die Anwesenheit einer umfangreichen spätchalkolithischen Schicht ist zu erwähnen, die die kontinuierliche Besiedlung des Gebietes am Ende des 5. Jahrtausends vor Christus bezeugt. In Falle der beiden Hügeln erkennt man generell eine vergleichbare Bautechnik, die für den Komplex KGK VI charakteristisch ist.

Es steht außer Zweifel, dass – bei der Analyse der Artefakte aus den beiden Siedlungen – sehr viele Übereinstimmungen im gesamten spätchalkolithischen Komplex KGK VI hervorgehoben werden können. An dieser Stelle werde ich die nur für die beiden Hügel spezifischen Übereinstimmungen in Betracht ziehen. Man muss die eindeutigen

¹ Andreescu, Lazăr, Ignat, Moldoveanu 2011.

² Andreescu, Lazăr, Ignat, Moldoveanu 2011: 133-134; Chohadzhiev St., Chohadzhiev A. 2005: 9.

Unterschiede im Inventar der einzelnen Behausungen der beiden Hügel erwähnen, einige mit auch heute beeindruckenden Meisterwerken der prähistorischen Kunst, andere mit für die Epoche üblichem Inventar.

N. Angelov hat die späteste Siedlung erforscht, die 21 Gebäude umfasst. Er interpretierte eines von diesen (Nummer 4) als Heiligtum. In ihm entdeckte er den sogenannten "Schatz von Hotnitsa" (Abb. 1: 2), der 40 goldene Schmuckstücke umfasst³. Ähnlich ist die Situation in Sultana (Abb. 1: 1) – dort findet sich auch eine Kombination von spezifischer Architektur und goldenen Artefakten⁴. Die Entdeckung von goldenen Schmuckstücken setzte sich auch während unserer neuen Untersuchungen in Hotnitsa fort (Abb. 1: 3, 4: In unterschiedlichen Schichten haben wir noch 5 Schmuckstücke entdeckt – Amulette sowie Ringe⁵. Alle diese weisen ausgezeichnete Übereinstimmungen mit den goldenen Schmuckstücken aus Sultana auf. Das Gold mag vom goldhaltigen Sand der Flüsse stammen, die aus dem Balkangebirge ausströmen und in die Donau einfließen. Das Verhältnis zwischen Gold und Silber bei den Fundstücken aus Hotnitsa liegt bei 12:1-7:1 wobei die Qualität des Goldes zwischen ein und 21-22 Karat liegt (Abb. 1: 4); im Unterschied zu dem Gold aus der Varnaer Nekropole, bei dem der Anteil des Silbers erheblich höher ist – zwischen 9 und 14%. Diese Tatsache deutet darauf hin, dass die Schmuckstücke voneinander getrennt hergestellt wurden. Diese Möglichkeit wird durch das festgestellte Fehlen von Platin bei der chemischen Zusammensetzung der Fundstücke aus Hotnitsa nahegelegt, während bei der Legierung derjenigen aus Varna in nahezu allen Fundstücken Platin präsent ist. Auch in dieser Region wurden vermutlich die goldenen Schmuckstücke produziert, die eine große typologische Übereinstimmung mit den goldenen Fundstücken aus dem gesamten Balkan-Raum aufweisen. Man muss erwähnen, dass in keinem der erforschten Hügel im Komplex KGK VI goldene Artefakte in solchen Mengen entdeckt wurden, sondern nur vereinzelte Fundstücke. Häufig finden wir sowohl in Rumänien als auch in Hotnitsa Repliken der goldenen Amlette, die aus Ton (Abb. 1: 5), Knochen oder Stein hergestellt wurden – ein Beweis für frühe soziale Differenzierung in beiden Gebieten (Чохаджиев 2003).

Unter den vielen bekannten Arten von Herden und Gebäuden sind für beide Siedlungen insbesondere Typen von Gebäuden bzw. Heiligtümern von Interesse, die sich von

³ Ангелов 1959.

⁴ Hălcescu 1995.

⁵ Чохаджиев 2010: 88.

den üblicherweise verbreiteten durch ihre seltene Form und spezifische Architekturdetails unterscheiden (Abb. 2: 1-2).

Viele Übereinstimmungen bei vielfältigen anthropomorphen Bildern – Tongefäßen sowie Figuren – können erwähnt werden (Abb. 2: 3-6; Abb. 3: 1, 2).

Am meisten beeindrucken die stilistischen Ähnlichkeiten zwischen Tongefäßen mit anthropomorphen Bildern (Abb. 3: 3, 4) in Hotnitsa – eine Schale mit der plastischen Komposition von Mutter mit Kind im Schoß, in Sultana – die Komposition der berühmten “Verliebten” und andere mit einzelnen Darstellungen. Im Unterschied zu Rumänien sind in Bulgarien bis heute keine anderen vergleichbaren Gefäße mit plastisch wiedergegebenen menschlichen Figuren entdeckt worden. Außer der ähnlichen Thematik muss auch die Ähnlichkeit bei der Anordnung der Verzierungen und die spezifische farbliche Gestaltung erwähnt werden – eine Kombination von roter und weißer Mineralfarbe, wahrscheinlich mit für die damalige Gesellschaft klarer Symbolik⁶. Offenbar war diese Gruppe von Tongefäßen nicht zum alltäglichen Gebrauch bestimmt. Die farbliche Verzierung und die Verteilung der anthropomorphen Bilder schließen die übliche Verwendung dieser Gefäße aus. Höchstwahrscheinlich waren sie mit besonderen Riten verbunden, die möglicherweise die Gründung der Familie, die menschliche Reproduktion und das Wohlergehen des Hauses betreffen.

Bei der Analyse der Topographie der beiden Hügel beobachtet man grundlegende formale Unterschiede. Der Hügel Sultana liegt an einem Ort, der hoch über die Gegend herausragt, im Unterschied zu den übrigen Hügeln in diesem Gebiet – in der Regel von der Landschaft gedeckt⁷. Der Hügel in Hotnitsa ist auf eine andere Weise hervorgehoben (Abb. 4). Die Analyse der Lage der Hügel im Einzugsgebiet des Flusses Yantra zeigt, dass auf einer Fläche von mehr als 5000 Quadratkilometern neun und 29 spätchalkolithische Siedlungen lokalisiert sind. Der Siedlungshügel Hotnitsa liegt im ungefähren Mittelbereich dieses Gebietes. Im Umkreis von circa 10 Kilometern um den Hügel herum sind bis heute keine spätchalkolithische Siedlungen bekannt. Die Zahl der Siedlungen, die im Umkreis von 20 Kilometern liegen, überwiegt – es sind 12 Hügel bekannt, wobei die am nächsten gelegene Siedlung etwa 10 Kilometer entfernt ist, und die am weitesten entfernte etwa 19 km.

Im Umkreis von 20 bis 30 Kilometern sinkt die Anzahl der Siedlungen auf 9, wobei man deren Streuung oder das Fehlen von einer Agglomeration auf geringerer Fläche bemerkt.

⁶ Чохаджиев 2011.

Eine Ausnahme bilden die Hügel in nordöstlicher Richtung, die zu einer Ansammlung von 3 Hügeln gezählt werden können, die etwa 19 Kilometer entfernt liegen. In einem Umkreis von 30 bis 40 Kilometern sind sieben Siedlungen – regelmäßig verstreut bei großen Entfernungen zu einander, vermutlich wegen der stark zerklüfteten, hügeligen Landschaft. Für uns ist der Zusammenhang von Siedlungen im Umkreis von bis zu 20 Kilometern der interessanteste. In diesem Bereich sind die Hügel in drei Einheiten konzentriert – die eine umfasst sechs, jede der übrigen je drei. Der Abstand zwischen diesen Einheiten liegt zwischen dreizehn bis zwanzig Kilometern. Innerhalb jeder Einheit, variiert der Abstand zwischen den Siedlungen von vier oder fünf bis zu zehn Kilometern – dies ist der übliche Abstand zwischen den späthalkolithischen Hügeln in Nordostbulgarien. Abgesehen von der ganzen Konventionalität dieser Verteilungen steht fest, dass bei allen Siedlungen eine Periode der Besiedlung während des Späthalkolithikums bezeugt ist. Es ist problematisch anzunehmen, dass diese Siedlungen gleichzeitig existierten, jedoch wurden diese Gebiete im Laufe von 300-450 Jahren bewohnt, was die natürlichen Ressourcen beeinflusst hat – das Erschöpfen des Ackerlandes, der Bäume und der Tierpopulationen. Im Laufe der ganzen Periode, in der die Siedlungen der Hügel in Hotnitsa existiert hat und während im Verlauf des Frühchalkolithikums es näher gelegene Siedlungen gab, war der Hügel während des Späthalkolithikums der einzige auf einer ungefähren Fläche von etwa drei Hundert Quadratkilometern.

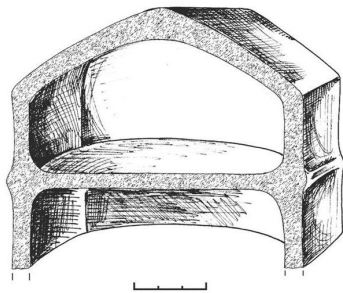
Wenn man den ganzen Kontext in Augenschein nimmt, lässt sich mit guten Gründen vermuten, dass die beiden Hügel, Sultana und Hotnitsa, eine höhere Stellung in der Siedlungshierarchie während des Späthalkolithikums hatten – jeweils am linken Ufer der Donau (entlang des Flusses Mostischtya) und im Einzugsgebiet des Flusses Yantra.

⁷ Andreescu, Lazăr, Ignat, Moldoveanu 2011: 136-138.

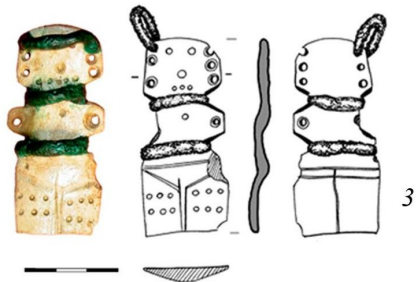


Abb. 1. Amulette und Ringe aus Gold: 1 - Sultana – 1985; 2 – Hotnitsa – 1957; 3, 4 – Hotnitsa – 2000-2006; 5 – Repliken der goldenen Amulette aus Ton – Hotnitsa (nach Andreescu, Lazăr, Ignat, Moldoveanu 2011; Чохаджиев 2003; Чохаджиев 2010).

Hotnitsa



1

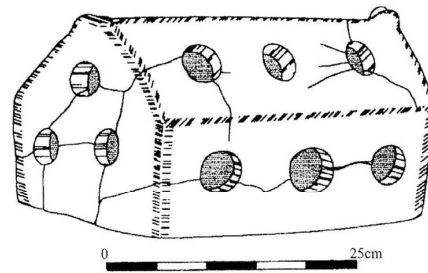


3



5

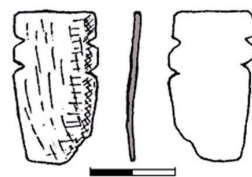
Sultana



2



4



6

Abb. 2. Modelle von Gebäuden und anthropomorphe Figuren aus Knochen und Marmor: 1, 3, 5 – aus Hotnitsa; 2, 4, 6 – aus Sultana (nach Andreescu 2003; Andreescu, Lazăr, Ignat, Moldoveanu 2011).

Hotnitsa



1



3

Sultana



2



4

Abb. 3. Anthropomorphe Gefäße: 1, 3 – aus Hotnitsa; 2, 4 – aus Sultana (nach Dumitrescu 1973; Andreescu 2003).

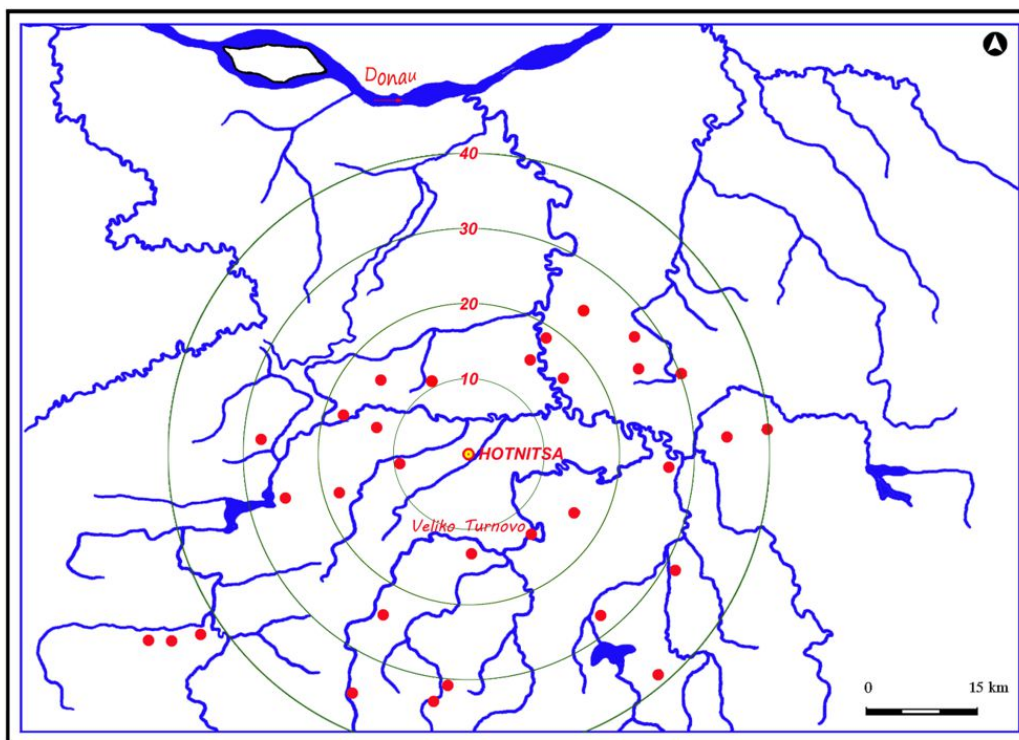


Abb. 4. Fluss Yantra mit berühmten spätchalkolithische Siedlungen und Siedlungshügel Hotnitsa.

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‘Snakes’ ornaments in Cucuteni-Tripolye: icon, symbol or signal? (to the problem on interpretation of decorative motifs)

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Studies on ‘snake’ motifs of Cucuteni-Tripolye ornaments have a long tradition in historiography ascending to the beginning of 20th century, when helical patterns were interpreted as stylized images of snakes for the first time (V. Khvojka; K. Bolsunovsky etc.). Though during subsequent decades the line of semantic studies was not continued, this theme became topical in the second half of 20th century. This turn was linked to the building of global schemes of reconstruction of early agriculturalists’ ideology made by B. Rybakov and M. Gimbutas¹. The weakness of such constructs lies in the principles of using of free associations and removing of analogies from the whole spectrum of world ethnography rather than study of ornamental traditions of concrete archaeological assemblages in their development. Against a background of proposed interpretations² quite a productive approach demonstrated the point of view of V. Balabina, who aimed to consider ‘snake’ ornaments as a universal sign with varying manner of execution³. But ‘snake’ representations within the diversity of Cucuteni-Tripolye patterns raise a number of questions, which are still open, and which are related to the origins, development, functions and meaning of such representations.

‘Snake’ motifs in Precucuteni — Early Tripolye assemblages

Ornamental motifs that might be identified as figures of snakes are frequent in assemblages of the early period of the Cucuteni-Tripolye culture, which received the designation Precucuteni — Tripolye A⁴. Apart from the statement of its presence itself, it is important to understand the place of

¹ Рыбаков 1981; Gimbutas 1974.

² Мельничук 1990; Збенович 1991; Риндюк 1994; Бурдо 1999 etc.

³ Балабина 1998.

⁴ The author agrees with the position of C.-E. Ursu that Precucuteni does not represent a separate archaeological culture, but a chronological horizon, the earliest stage of the Ariusd-Cucuteni-Tripolye cultural horizon (complex) (Ursu 2014). This same position is shared by the majority of researchers from the countries of the former USSR: Moldova, Ukraine, Russia.

these motives in Cucuteni-Tripolye pottery assemblages and shapes.

As an example, such assemblages occur in the materials from the Florești I settlement that was investigated by T. S. Passek in 1955–1961⁵. By the characteristics of its pottery ornamentation, this settlement can be dated to the Precucuteni II phase belonging to the earliest Precucuteni - Tripolye A sites that are nowadays known in the Prut-Dniester interfluvies. Unfortunately, this assemblage was not published as a whole and it is still represented only in preliminary publications and references in general works. The collections of artifacts from Florești I are storied in the National Museum of History of Moldova in Chișinău and, partly, in the Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography of the Russian Academy of Sciences (MAE RAS; collection 6484).

The collection contains a set of pottery shapes typical for this period and it includes: storage vessels with lids, bowls and pedestaled bowls (“vas suport” or “străchini cu picior”), beakers and jars (with transitional forms), pots and ladles, and so called ‘kitchen ware’ without ornamentation - ‘pithoses’ and ‘cauldrons’⁶.

‘Complete’ ornamental composition occurs only on storage vessels and on additional leads. It is based on repetition of the motif that is formed of two arches twisted towards each other - ‘snakes’ with semicircular heads or triangular ‘tongues’.

It is possible to subdivide this category of pottery into two types that might have had different origins. The first type is represented by vessels with conical bodies, ending in angled shoulders and cylindrical rims that adapted for cover (fig. 1/1–4, 6–7; 2/1).

The ornamental compositions on these vessels cover the all surface (body and shoulders) and it is placed in vertical metopes divided by vertical strips. The typical horizontal zones of such ornaments are rotated 90° and include ongoing figures of ‘snakes’. In most cases, with few exceptions the whole composition is subdivided into four metopes. Exceptions are possible, however, showing subdivision in three parts in a limited number of individual vessels, as in series from the Precucuteni II settlement in Baia (Romania), where among 15 reconstructible vessels only one item shows subdivision in three metopes⁷.

The idea that such composition could be the depiction of anthropomorphic personages — such as a ‘Snake-faced Goddess’, embodied in vertical elements, — was first proposed by D. Telegin⁸. It has also been lately propounded by C.-E. Ursu and C. Aparaschivei, who also assume silhouettes of figures probably “performing a dance”⁹. However, such an interpretation raises the question: why are these anthropomorphic personages drawn so schematically, unlike the snakes are rendered more

⁵ Пасек 1961; see also: Bodean 2001: 38–46.

⁶ Збенович 1989: 75 et al., рис. 47; Marinescu-Bîlcu 1974.

⁷ Ursu, Aparaschivei 2014; Урсу, Апараскивей 2014: рис. ½.

⁸ Телегин 1994.

⁹ Ursu, Aparaschivei 2014.

‘naturalistically’?

The principles of such an ornamental construction provides possibilities to regard that development as a “technical” ornamentation that frequently occurs on Cucuteni-Tripolye pottery¹⁰. The prototype of this pottery shape is a tetrahedral box that is likely made of wood (fig. 1/5). The division into vertical elements reproduces the angles of such object, in which wooden walls were connected and reinforced by additional straps of bast or by strings. Such “stitching” is reproduced by horizontal and oblique lines that filled the figures. In the typologically later samples from Timkovo and Slobodka-Zapadnaya they were replaced by oblique lines;- and the upper parts of vertical strips which imitate fastenings at the upper part were shifted downward, and so the fracture of the profile became smoother (fig. 1/2–3).

The assumption of wooden prototypes is supported by the tradition of the earliest decoration technique of the Precucuteni pottery dry-surface carving by pointed-tool. Such technique recalls a tradition that was widespread in the Boian-Giulești culture, and resembles carved-wooden decoration. The position of the metopes, includes the ornaments that are rotated by 90°, does not contradict such a version: it corresponds to carving boards with a spiral snake-like decoration oriented vertically.

The distribution of such a type of storage vessels does not cover the whole Precucuteni - Tripolye A areal, but only limited groups of settlements. C.-E. Ursu and C. Aparaschivei marked two regions where such vessels occur: the Sub-Carpathian area (Precucuteni I–II Traian and Baia settlements) and later Precucuteni III Aleksandrovka group in the Dniester - Southern Bug interfluves¹¹.

Such vessels can be also revealed in the Florești assemblage, of the Răut basin (fig. 1/6–7; 2/1–3), which became an interjacent point between original region and place of later destination (fig. 4). Thus, it gives us possibilities to clarify the ways of resettlement of Precucuteni-Tripolye population, which were proposed by K. Chernysh¹² and Vl. Zbenovich¹³. The presence of such vessels has not yet been established in the Central Moldovan group that occupies the territory between the Sub-Carpathian and the Florești groups: further investigations can provide a more elaborated picture, but now it is impossible because of the low number of excavated settlements and the too few publications devoted to Precucuteni sites of this region¹⁴.

One more area of distribution of storage vessels with metopic ornamentation is the Middle Dniester area. Natalia Burdo mentioned the finds in Bernashovka and Okopy sites that belongs to the

¹⁰ Palaguta 2009; Палагута 2010; see also: Кожин 2014.

¹¹ Ursu, Aparaschivei 2014: fig. 7.

¹² Черныш 1976: fig. 1.

¹³ Збеневич 1989: 179–181, fig. 85.

¹⁴ Even if these assumptions will not proved to be tenable in the future, after C.-E. Ursu and C. Aparaschivei’s article there is a reason for a more detailed analysis of Precucuteni ceramic assemblages, where such forms may be also identified.

Precucuteni II stage¹⁵, which were missed in Vl. Zbenovich's publications¹⁶. This represents the first stage of the Precucuteni-Tripolye settlement in the Middle Dniester area, but nowadays it is impossible to detect the origin of this group of sites: the bearers of the Precucuteni culture might have come here both from Central Moldova and the Prut-Dniester interfluvies. The type of vessels under discussion disappeared here in the next Precucuteni III stage: it is absent in Bernovo-Luka and Lenkovtsy assemblages¹⁷. Except the above mentioned areas, this kind of vessels is also absent in other areas of Precucuteni-Tripolye that gives grounds to assume its relationship only with certain groups of bearers of the culture.

A second type of vessels with developed snake-like ornamentation is represented by the pear-shaped vessels with spherical body and conical or cylindrical low part (fig. 3/5). Pear-shaped vessels are widely distributed in the whole Precucuteni-Tripolye A areal. Their body forms the surface for organizing a composition of ongoing or S-spirals which are also based on 'naturalistic' drawings of snakes, but placed in a horizontal ornamental zone. This type of pear-shaped vessels was basic for further development of helical compositions during late Precucuteni and Cucuteni A - Tripolye BI periods¹⁸. In Precucuteni III assemblages, the construction and design of pear-shaped vessels correspond with the construction and design of bowls (fig. 3/4, 6).

Both types of storage vessels used with lids that were also ornamented with snake-motives (fig. 2/5–6; 3/1). In all cases the motifs of lids ornamentation were composed in a circular zone that covered the surface around the knob-handle. Thus, the whole composition of storage vessel with lid ideally presupposed covering by snake figures.

Except of storage vessels, 'naturalistic' snake-like motives are present on supports of pedestaled bowls. They are found in the Precucuteni I sites of Olteni in Transylvania¹⁹, Traian-Dealul Viei in Sub-Carpathian area²⁰. Such items are also present in Florești I (fig. 2/8) together with derivative forms (fig. 3/2), such as the ones in the Rogojeni I site nearby (fig. 3/3)²¹. Pedestaled bowls are multiple during the Precucuteni period, and in the Precucuteni I–II phases their ornamentation was done by using archaic carving technique (as in storage vessels). Their origin might be also linked with wooden prototypes (bowl supports?). The amount of these items decreased in the next Cucuteni A — Tripolye BI period, and the modeling and decoration of their supporting part where also changed: these were often formed as a group of anthropomorphic figures²².

¹⁵ Бурдо 1993: 26, fig. 1.

¹⁶ Збенович 1980; Збенович 1989.

¹⁷ see: Пассек 1961; Черныш 1959; Черныш, Массон 1982.

¹⁸ Палагуца 1999; Palaguta 2007.

¹⁹ Garvăn, Buzea, Frînculeasa 2009: 72.

²⁰ Garvăn, Buzea, Frînculeasa 2009: 59

²¹ Bodean 2003: 7–8.

²² Monah 1997: 160–166. There resulted a chain of associations and allusions that depended on the rhythmical organization of the design, drums (cylindrical supports could also carry out this function, see: Kovács, Gridan

As for the other pottery shapes (beakers, bowls, jars, pots, etc.), they do not present - 'naturalistic' - snake motives as the base of ornamental compositions. Florești I examples demonstrate that there were used reduced, stylized and schematized elements, where snake motifs were often reduced to arches, triangles and other geometrical forms (fig. 2/4, 7)²³. The same picture occurs in the Rogojeni site nearby²⁴. It depends on another configuration of vessel' shapes that does not provide a possibility to expand the whole composition, and, possibly, on its function, that did not coincide directly with the one of storage vessels and did not need corresponding decoration.

Helical patterns during later phases and the phenomenon of snakes "renaissance" in period B

The disappearance of 'naturalistic' snake figures and the development of complicated abstract helical designs during Cucuteni A - Tripolye BI and later Cucuteni A-B - Tripolye BII periods was described in publications of the present author²⁵. Such a process of design transformations implies a series of regularities, which are peculiar not only for Cucuteni-Tripolye, but also for decoration systems in general.

First of all, there is the reversibility of ornaments: conversion of background into pattern and vice versa. This composition principle allows both the decor and the background areas to be perceived as decorative figures. Thus, it implies "a semantic equivalence between the background and the actively applied composition, interchangeability of structural elements of the decoration field during creation and 'reading' of the composition"²⁶. Such a process can be observed on Cucuteni A pottery, and its result is a changing of the 'snake' design, which goes to the background, to positive compositions of waves and S-spirals²⁷.

Second, it is the influence of "technical decoration" and "technical" elements (for example, redrawn handles), which were included in composition and played the role of ornament layout²⁸.

Third, when additional elements of design came to be initial ones (such sequence can be traced on some vessels in the Jura assemblage of the Cucuteni A period) or formed a dominant line in ornamental composition. The number of additional elements in some cases also increases, when the artisans wanted to fill the maximum of the ornamental field (so-called "*horror vacui*" principle). Thus, the application of painted ornamentation was reduced to a set of standard operations, developed by one

2015; Палагуца 2007: 112–113), dancing figures and snakes, leading us into the ritual sphere of Cucuteni-Tripolye.

²³ Палагуца 2011a: 220–223, fig. 74/10–12.

²⁴ Bodean 2001: 86–98.

²⁵ Палагуца 1999; Palaguta 2007.

²⁶ Кожин 1981: 136.

²⁷ Палагуца 2009.

²⁸ Palaguta 2009.

or another group of artisans²⁹.

Such a transition process, from naturalistic elements to abstract and decorative ones, occurred within the frameworks of the whole Cucuteni-Tripolye areal. Relics of snake motifs may be found in groups of sites located in the Southern Bug basin, which formed a periphery of the Cucuteni - Tripolye area. It occurred in Cucuteni A Berezovskaya GES assemblage (fig. 3/8)³⁰, and even during the Cucuteni A-B - Tripolye BII period in Klischev (fig. 3/9)³¹.

The new stage of snake motif development occurred in the Cucuteni B - Tripolye CI period. However, it does not indicate any connections with previous early development. Snakes were drawn here in abstract forms as wavy line, ending in oval or circular dots. For example, such figures are drawn inside the bowls or in separated zones on the necks of big vessels at Bilcze Złote (fig. 5/1, 3, 4)³². As zigzags they occur on the Brînzeni-type pottery (fig. 5/2)³³, and as S-shaped figures on pots from Valea Lupului (fig. 5/5). These are usually connected with the presence of other zoomorphic and anthropomorphic figures that were widely spread during that period, and in later phases might be included in compositions formed by anthropomorphic and zoomorphic personages (fig. 5/6)³⁴.

Anthropomorphic and zoomorphic elements were incorporated into abstract basic helical and ‘Tangentenkreisband’ schemes, but they should not be regarded as linked to those³⁵; they might be linked to a general process, which is also characterized by the appearances of a number of abstract elements³⁶. Some specialists associate these elements with a sign system³⁷.

“Snake” ornaments of Cucuteni-Tripolye and helical patterns in design traditions of the European Neolithic

The key point in the understanding of Cucuteni-Tripolye ‘snake’ motifs is their connection with the development of a variety of helical patterns within the whole circle of the European Neolithic and Copper Age ‘painted pottery’ cultures. The solution to this problem needs clarification of the evolution of the multiple-line decoration’ within the framework of each archaeological culture that belongs to this cultural area. That question under discussion was posed in the papers of the Ukrainian archaeologist Oleg Kandyba 80 years ago³⁸. Since then, however, his work was not perpetuated. During the second half of the 20th century outstanding authorities in the field of archaeology, first of all American Prof. Marija Gimbutas and Russian Academician Boris Rybakov, offered to interpret

²⁹ Кожин 2014: 122.

³⁰ see: Цвек 2004.

³¹ Заец, Рыжов 1992.

³² Tkachuk 2013: pl. 13/1, 3; 19/1; 20/1–2; 25/3; 26/1–4 etc.

³³ Tkachuk 2013: pl. 20/2; 89/5; 121.

³⁴ Церна 2006; see also: Збенович 1998.

³⁵ Палагута 2011a: 247–253.

³⁶ Ткачук 1993.

³⁷ Ткачук 2005.

³⁸ Kandyba 1936; Kandyba 1937.

ornaments on the basis of their subjective associations³⁹.

During recent times the most elaborate study on snake motifs in the context of the European Neolithic and Copper Age cultures was propounded by V. Balabina⁴⁰. Her approach was based on Yuri Lotman's semiotics idea of a universal cultural text: she proposed that all the snake-like figures within the whole area of the cultures under discussion reproduced images of similar or relative meanings⁴¹.

However, most of the helical patterns of the European Neolithic do not recall the same naturalistic images of snakes as in Cucuteni - Tripolye. The nearest series of 'snake-head' representations that looks like Cucuteni - Tripolye, occurs only on Gumelnița - Karanovo VI pottery⁴². Both cultures border on each other and were in close connections during a long time of their coexistence, that is why such similarities in ornamental forms may be interpreted as a result of Cucuteni-Tripolye influence, but not as native Gumelnița tradition: the series of such ornaments is limited, whereas other forms of abstract design are prevalent.

The origin of helical patterns' could not be linked directly with snake images and they often appeared to be 'technical' decoration. Such way is the most probable for spirals in Early Neolithic Karanovo I-II ornamentation, where 'running' spirals composed with reticulated fields⁴³. This decoration could derive from wickerwork, but it could not be the direct reproduction of basket' textures, revised during the process of its execution in painting. Such principle of decor formation, based on technical ornaments, might be used while creating of spiraled ornamental motifs of Early Neolithic Starčevo-Criș pottery and in cultures of Late Neolithic Karanovo V – Marica – Sava – Boian – Poljanitsa - Gradeshnitsa horizon in the Balkan-Carpathian area. The motifs of ornamental' diversity could be extracted not only from basketry, but also from woodcarving and textiles. Such derivations also occurred in the polychrome painting of the Lengyel pottery.

The LBK and subsequent cultures do not display naturalistic snake-like elements of pottery designs either. The relief image of the snake is represented inside the bowl from the Dvory nad Žitavou grave⁴⁴, but is possibly associated with the typical meander ornament on the outside of the same bowl?

LBK pottery-making tradition itself was formed under the influence of non-ceramic containers and non-ceramic technologies. This can be assumed for its ornamentation too⁴⁵. The assumption is confirmed by multiple examples of LBK vessels, which were found in wells and which show various

³⁹ see: Палагута 2011b; Palaguta 2016, in print.

⁴⁰ Балабина 1998.

⁴¹ Балабина 1998: 137.

⁴² Балабина 1998: рис. 3/9–11.

⁴³ see: Николов 1983.

⁴⁴ Pavúk 1964: 11–16, Abb. 5–6.

⁴⁵ Kozhin, Palaguta 2016, in print.

examples of preserved applications or braiding by bark strips or straws over gum coating⁴⁶. The particular evolution of LBK pottery excludes any influence of that tradition on the formation of Precucuteni ceramics, and claimed similarity of some motifs does not also imply the same semantic value.

Against this background, the naturalistic images that formed the basis of the Precucuteni — Early Tripolye decorative system look like a unique ornamental tradition. This is also evident in an original representative shape, when snake heads, as noted by V. Balabina, are depicted in a peculiar “X-ray style”⁴⁷.

Explanatory hypothesis: snakes as a protective sign and ID code

How should one interpret the Cucuteni-Tripolye ‘snake’ ornaments? At the beginning of the 20th century K. Bolsunovsky assumed a protective function of snake’s representation⁴⁸. Such symbolic meaning was later taken into consideration in the works of other authors⁴⁹. It can be supported by the fact that the most expressive and fully developed snake designs were most frequently used for large storage vessels and their lids. The snake images on Greek vases of the Geometrical period⁵⁰(fig. 5/7) may have played the same role, as the similar images of Cucuteni-Tripolye

As for the semantics of prehistoric imaginations, worth remembering is E. Antonova and D. Rayevsky’s remark that “interpreting artifacts of illiterate primitive societies, even if we provide a lot of sufficient informative data, we cannot expect to reach a comprehensive reconstruction of mythology; we can speak only about penetration to the principles of the bearers’ mythological perception of the world”⁵¹. So, in the absence of the texts it is possible only to state that concrete stories might have belonged to the wide semantic field of ideas about snakes as *genii loci* — keepers of the place and house, snakes as personification of the spirits of ancestors’, “children of the native earth”⁵² the earth's fertility, etc. Such functions can be considered to belong to the tradition of using snakes as a kind of ‘home animals’, to protect provisions from mice, which were widespread in ancient Europe and in ethnographic peasant households of many ancient and modern European peoples⁵³. According to such functions of ‘home’ snakes, multiple cults, myths, auspicious formulas and other representations arose.

The ‘technical’ origin of the ornament does not exclude the possibility of figurative and metaphorical interpretation of its elements and motives by ancient artists themselves. Such rethinking

⁴⁶ Elburg 2013.

⁴⁷ Балабина 1998: 140–143.

⁴⁸ Болсуновский 1905.

⁴⁹ see, for example: Рыбаков 1981.

⁵⁰ Bothmer 1987: 11, fig. 1.

⁵¹ Антонова, Раевский 1991: 223.

⁵² Herod. Hist. I, 78.

for example, is reflected in the differences among designations of the same decorative elements within the Pueblo Indian communities⁵⁴. Similarly in Precucuteni the figures resulting from the transformation of the structural details of the prototype (ribs of boxes made of wood or other organic material) could be interpreted as anthropomorphic, zoomorphic or fantasy characters. This does not contradict modern interpretations of such figures as anthropomorphic ones⁵⁵.

That is why it is possible only to determine the semantic field of Cucuteni-Tripolye snake ornaments as signs related to snakes. According to C. S. Peirce's semiotic terminology 'snake images' could be considered not as *icons*, but as *signals* or *indices* — *signs* or *symbols*. They were used as standardized symbols of protection and might be linked with a chain of associations⁵⁶. But, by being included in ornamental compositions these images could not be taken as separate signs: the composition as a whole played the role of the same sign that indicated the following semantic field⁵⁷. Possible explanation for ethnographic data could be multiple and changeable even within the same community⁵⁸.

This ornament under discussion played the role of a marker, which not only marked category of vessels, but it also functioned as a cultural marker that indicated the belonging of this kind of items to bearers of a certain culture. Considering the use of derivative ornaments on certain kinds of pottery and the spreading of 'snake decoration' onto non-ceramic objects, including parts of houses decoration, for instance, house models with snake ornamentation⁵⁹, it can be assumed that snake-symbols were used as a part of the Precucuteni-Tripolye bearers' identification code⁶⁰. Its total dissemination during the initial period of the Cucuteni-Tripolye culture could be associated with certain myths and ideas about the origin of the bearers of that culture, but concrete contents of such myths are impossible to detect.

⁵³ Бер-Глинка 2015.

⁵⁴ Bunzel 1972.

⁵⁵ Телегин 1994; Ursu, Aparaschivei 2014.

⁵⁶ Leach 1976: 9 et al.

⁵⁷ The way of 'decoding' of Precucuteni ornaments which based on the postulate that ornament is a ideographic system consists of a signs (prototype of pictographic writing), as some researchers considered, is impossible (Палагута 2011).

⁵⁸ for more examples: Палагута 2011b; Палагута 2011c: 186–187.

⁵⁹ Збенович 1989: 123, fig. 78.

⁶⁰ Hodder 1982.

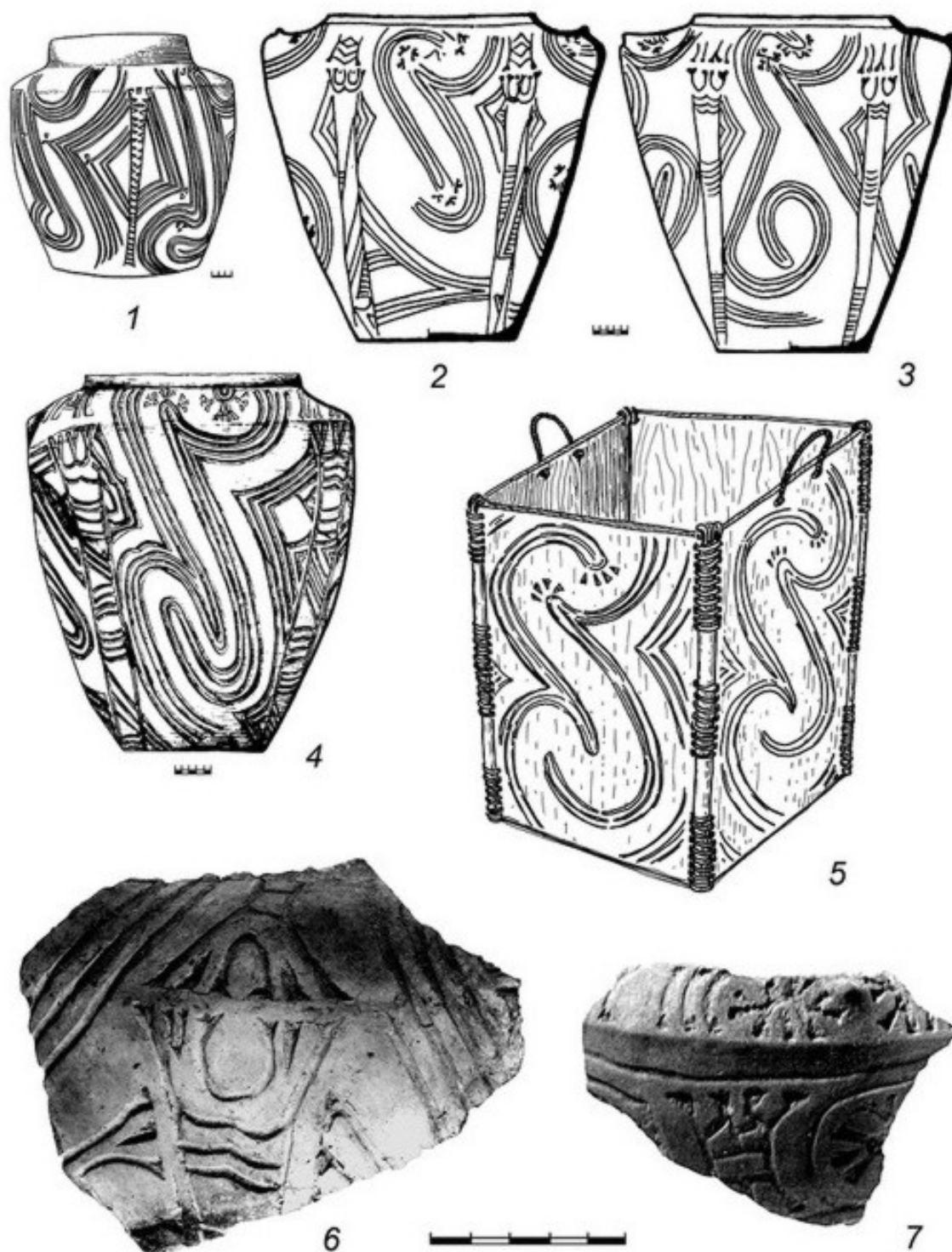


Fig. 1. Vessels with 'snake' ornamentation, Precucuteni - Tripolye A period: 1, Traian-Dealul Viei (by Черныш, Массон 1982); 2, Slobodka-Zapadnaya; 3, Timkovo (by Телегин 1994); 4, Baia-În Muchie (by Ursu, Aparaschivei 2014); 5, reconstruction of wooden box - possible prototype of vessels with vertical elements in decoration; 6-7, Florești (photo of C. Chernysh).

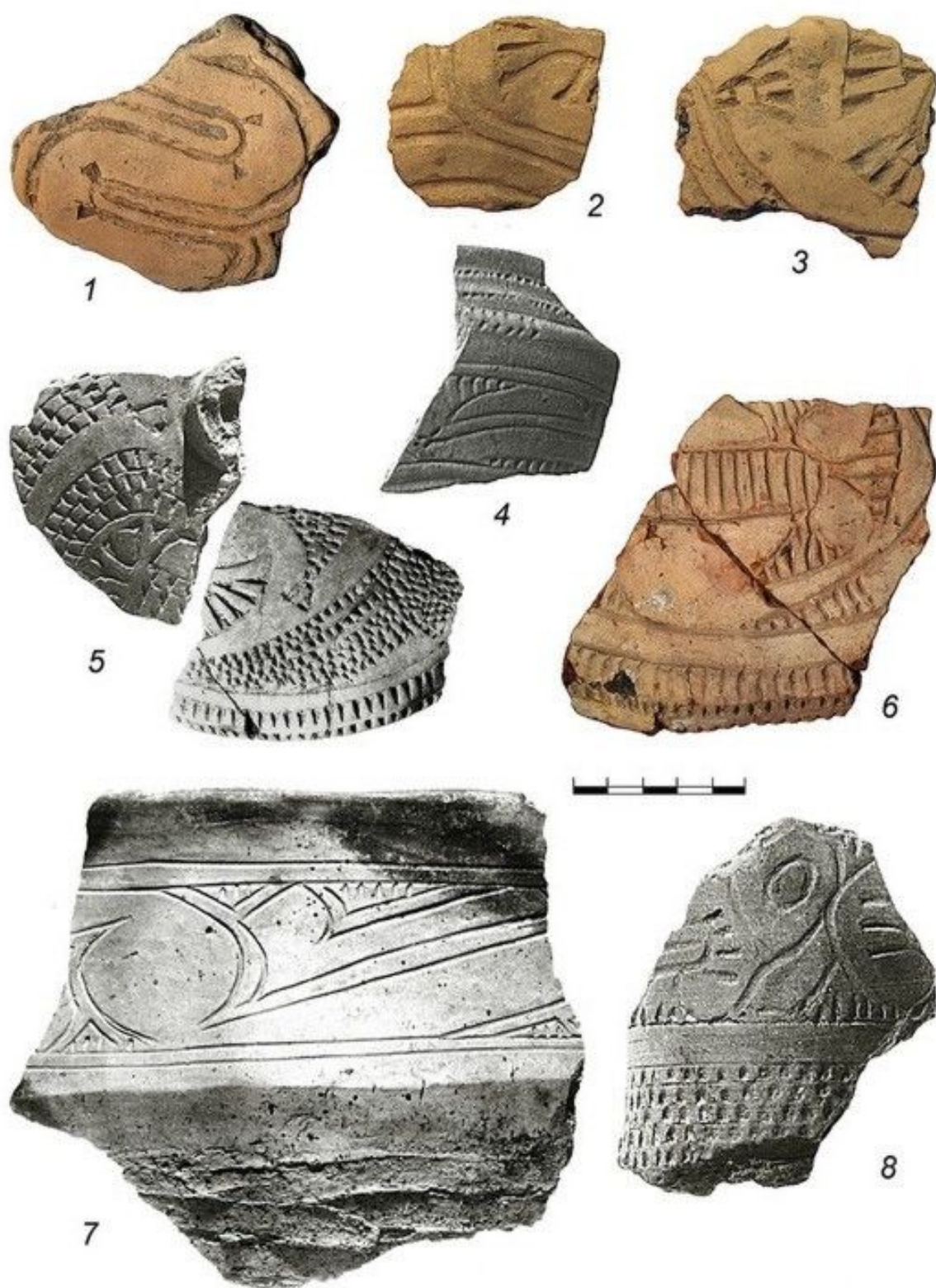


Fig. 2. Pottery fragments from Florești I (photos of the author and C. Chernysh).

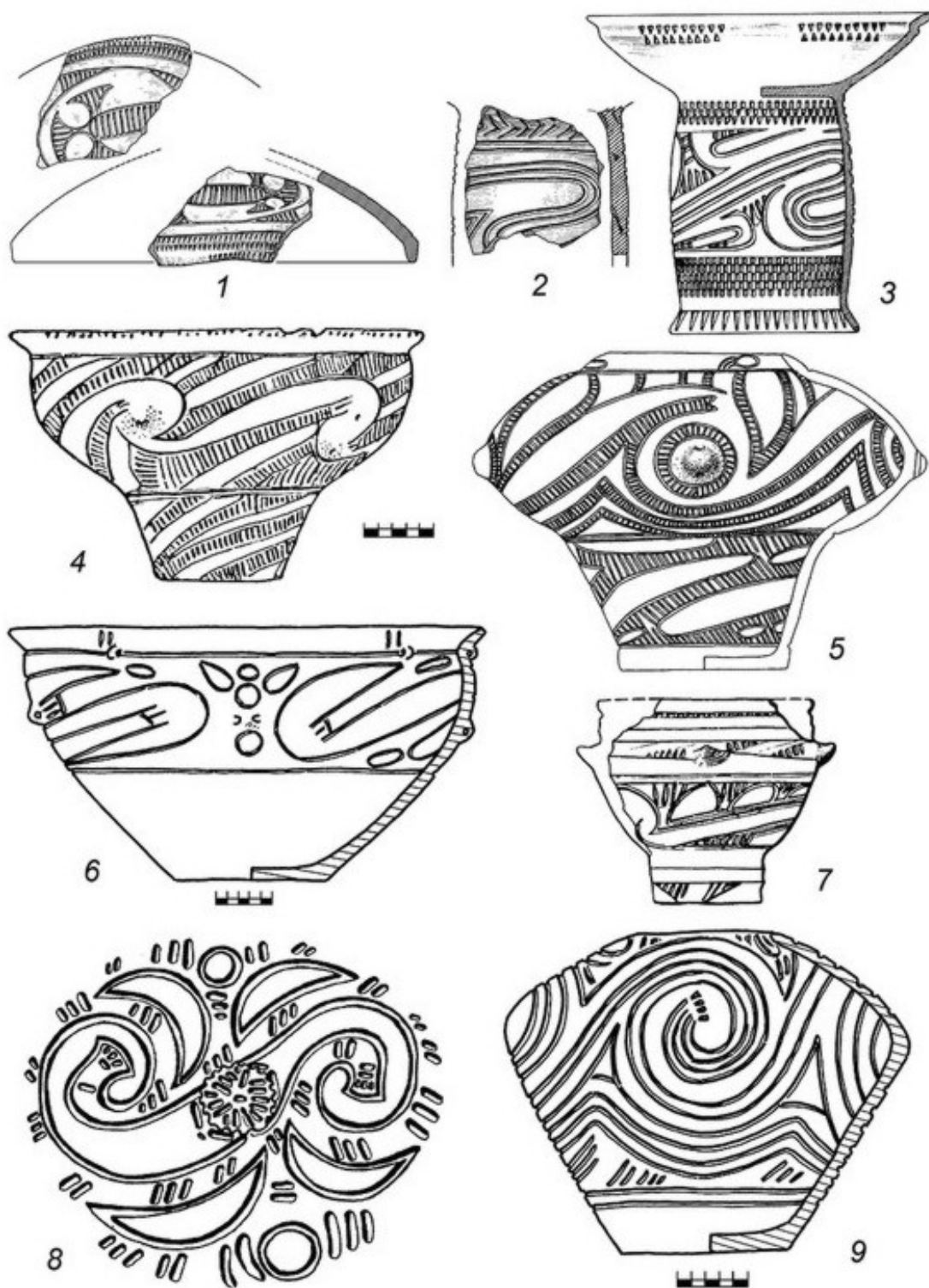


Fig. 3. Decoration with snake-like spirals of Precucuteni - Tripolye A and later period: 1-2, Florești; 3, 7, Rogojeni (by Bodean 2001 and Черныш, Массон 1982); 4, Cortani (by Збенович 1989); 5-6, Cărbuna (by Дергачев 1998); 8, Berezovskaya GES, Tripolye BI period (by Цвек 2004); 9, Klischev, Tripolye BII period (by Заец, Рыжов 1992).

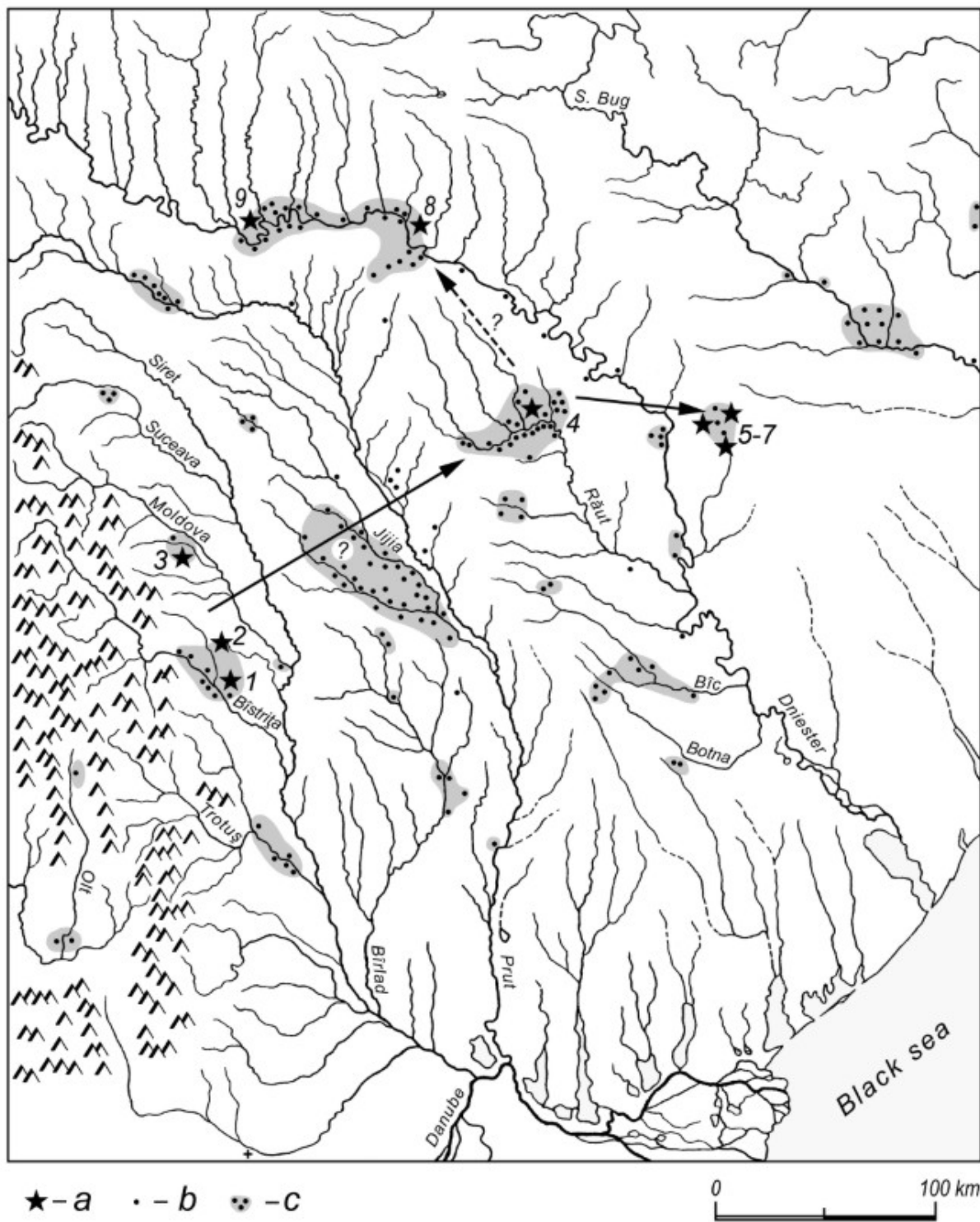


Fig. 4. Distribution of container-vessels with snake-like patterns and vertical elements: 1, Traian – Dealul Viei; 2, Ghigoești-Trudești; 3, Baia-În Muchie; 4, Florești; 5, Aleksandrovka; 6, Slobodka-Zapadnaya; 7, Timkovo; 8, Bernashivka; 9, Okopy.

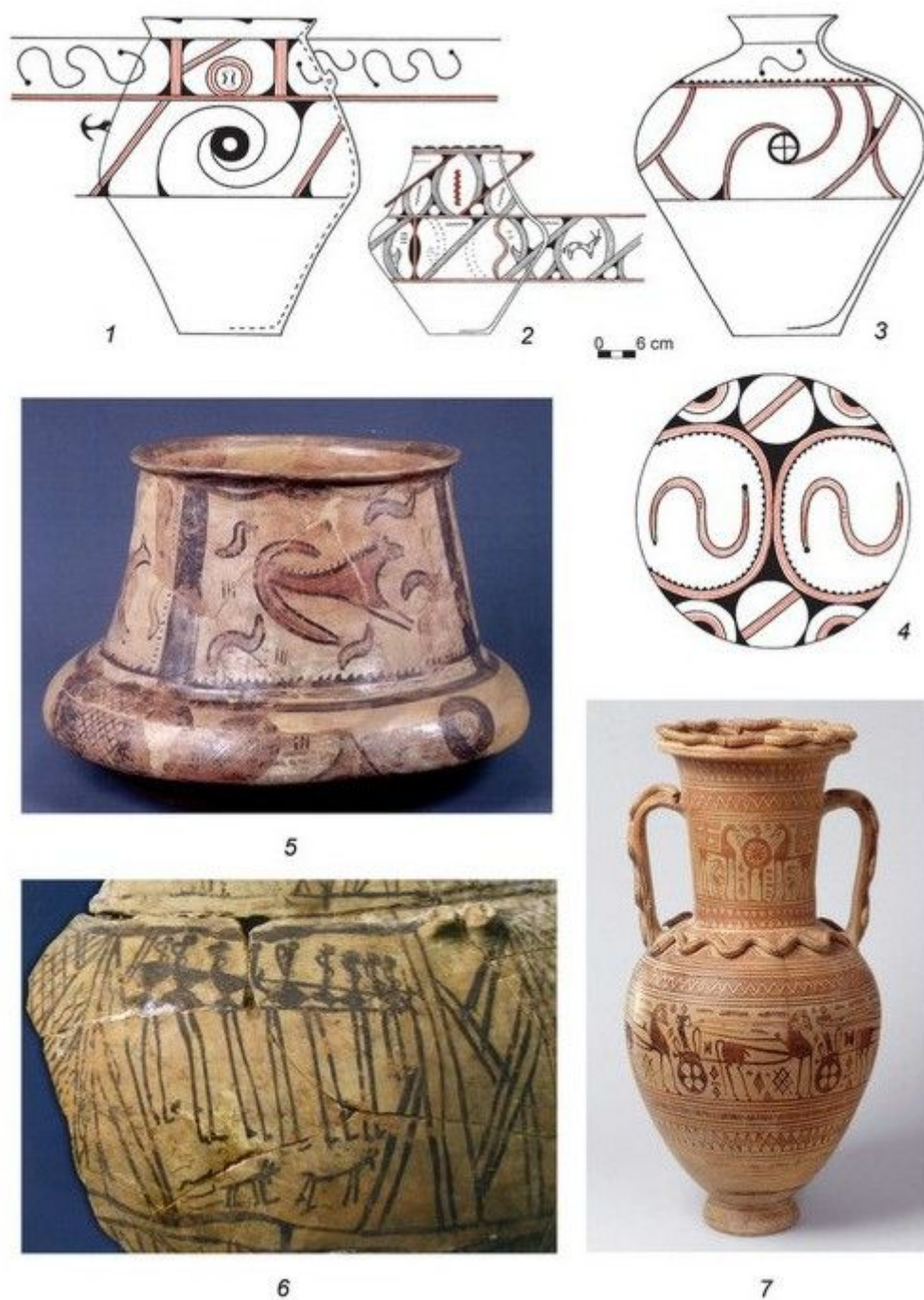


Fig. 5. 'Snakes' in late Tripolye decoration: 1–4, Bilcze Złote (by Ткачук 2013); 5, Valea Lupului (by Dumitrescu 1979); 6, Chirileni (by Церна 2006); 7, geometric style vase, dated about 700 BC (by Bothmer 1987).

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Symbols of power on the Cucutenian Anthropomorphic Statuettes. Case study – the Diagonals

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Introduction

The archaeology of the last few decades went beyond the antiquarism and simple collecting of artifacts and several formulae have been tried, of a historical, narrative or social-reconstruction character, which implies displaying of artifacts in their context. Since the past cannot be observed directly, whatever we try to find out about it must be reproduced as based on its durable effects, on the print it leaves on the present. Any attempt to find out something about a society that no longer exists depends on the study of the ethnological and ethnographic phenomena, on interpretations, analysis and deductions based on the material remains and the context in which the archaeological artifacts were discovered¹.

Recently it has been accepted that archaeology can offer a coherent vision on the social organization of the prehistoric human communities, but social archaeology is still in its early days and it needs a solid methodology to study this topic.

The present study follows an older interest of ours regarding the identification and interpreting of the visible/readable markers of power symbols in aeneolithic civilizations in the Romanian area. The anthropomorphic statuettes have raised an extraordinary interest since the beginning of archaeological research and it has been intensely studied. At the present there is an impressive literature on this topic, with studies, articles, monographs and syntheses of various complexities, studying various topics².

In this study we aim to analyze a part of the anthropomorphic figurines, namely those with a special type of decoration – diagonals. From the start we would like to mention that we will analyze all types of diagonals, regardless of their type of representation: incised, applied, or painted.

¹ Lévi-Strauss 1978: 120.

² Bibikov 1953: 206-210; Gimbutas 1974; Pogoševa 1983; 1985: 95-242; Biehl 1996: 153–176; Monah 1997; 2012; Burdo 2002: 61-145; 2014: 303-364; Bailey 2005; Țerna 2008: 33-39; *** Ursu et alii (eds.) 2014; Țurcanu 2011: 9-36.

The term “diagonal” used in this paper refers to the decorating element used on military uniforms by multiple societies in different historical periods. It is the belt that starts on the shoulder and it is connected on the waist or on the chest on the opposite side of the body.

Our analysis is based on specialty literature; although we analyzed a huge bibliographical list, we neither claim, nor have the impression that our research is exhaustive, that we identified and analyzed every statuette that has a diagonal (table 1); we consider this impossible, since there are estimated 9000 published anthropomorphic statuettes from over 500 researched Cucutenian sites³, in studies and articles in papers and special monographs, but also in *exotic places*, hard to obtain and study. Our aim is to identify elements of the social life, elements of the social hierarchies, differentiations in the artifacts that have been preserved, which cannot be found in other ways, and not to create exhaustive catalogues.

Our intention is to research the Neo-Aeneolithic sites north of the Danube, with a highlight on the Cucuteni Culture, more intensely researched and published. Depending on the literary sources available, we searched parallels in the contemporary cultures outside the Romanian territory, in the space between the rivers Prut and Dniester, as well as in the Trypillian area in today's Ukraine.

Our study and hypotheses are based on an illustration taken from the specialty literature. For a better rendering and visualization of the details we have processed the images, and, as such, they have different scales.

Conditions of discovery

Besides the very well known ritual situations that seem to be the most eloquent in terms of association-destination/functionality (Dumești, Buznea, Ghelăiești) on which it is pointless to insist here, most of the artifacts examined do not have special conditions of discovery or, maybe, the situation of the statuettes with diagonal was not noted as such, this type of artifacts being studied *in corpore* with the rest of the discoveries. However, it is worth to mention here the particular circumstances of Scânteia, where in Dwelling 5 were found in total 25 statuettes: three male, 19 female and three whose gender cannot be specified⁴; in Dwelling 1 were discovered 75 anthropomorphic statuettes and an exceptional inventory⁵.

The paste

Every statuette included in this study was modeled in clay. Most of the statuettes have been made of the same fine or semi-fine paste as the vessels, therefore we can deduce a high degree of attention dedicated to the quality of the raw material from which the pieces were made. As far as we know, among the statuettes analyzed,

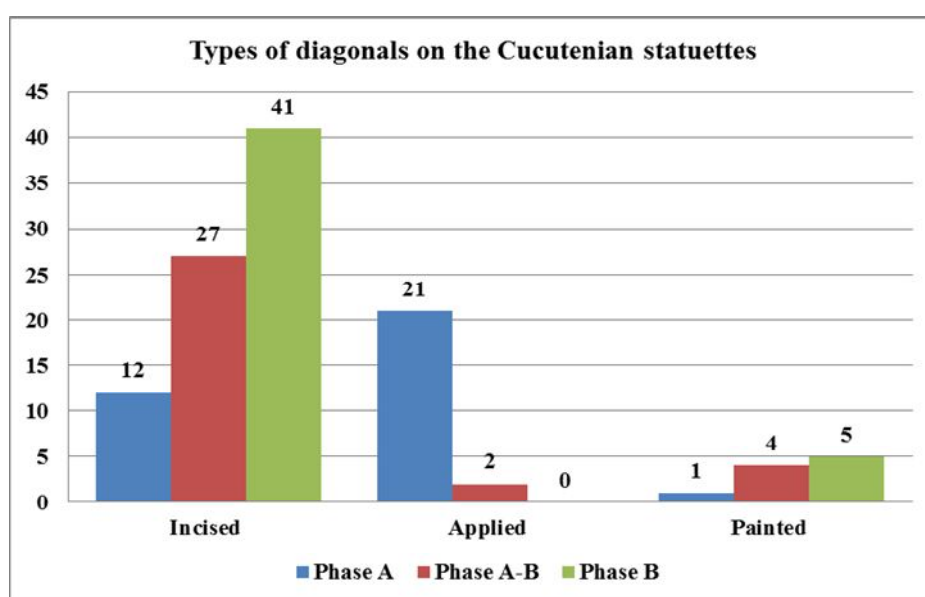
³ Information kindly supplied by Stanislav Țerna, whom we wish to thank; according to him, from a statistical-predictive point of view, the production of statuettes can be estimated in the Cucutenian sites to about 50,000; see also Țerna 2011: 12-14.

⁴ Mantu, Țurcanu 1999: 15.

there was none made of coarse paste, containing smashed shards as degreasing agent. Most of the pieces were carefully realized and probably burnt in the same kilns, together with the ceramics. The color palette differs according to the type of burning, comprising every known color, from yellowish-red to grey, most piece being red in different shades.

Modeling, typology, statistics

The Cucutenian plastic representations have been analyzed in countless studies⁶, pointless to resume here, more so since we did complex analyzes on other occasions⁷. However, in terms of the diagonals, we can make here some statistical observations⁸ (see table 3).



For Phase A, the situation is somewhat odd, in that the predominant decoration is the incised one, but the technique used to represent diagonals is the application of small strips of clay in 61.7% of cases, the incision being used in 35.2% of the situations identified by us. The painting appears only in one case (Fig. 3/13), this way of decorating is still not specific to this phase. The painted decoration on the anthropomorphic statuettes of Phase A appears as completely isolated, the Cucutenian craftsmen preferring other technical solutions for decoration.

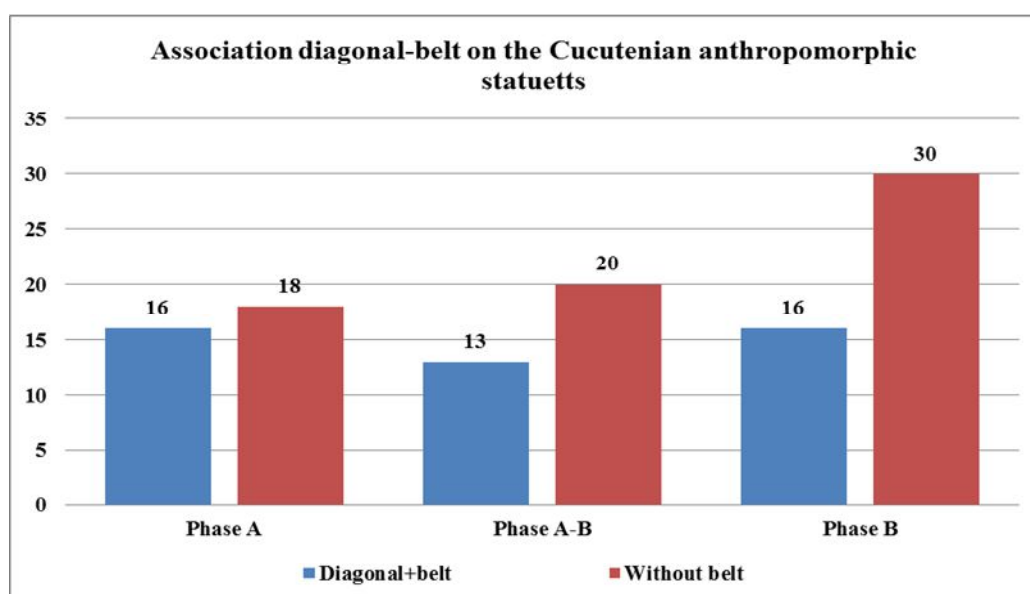
⁵ Besides the anthropomorphic statuettes there have been discovered 30 zoomorphic statuettes, 7 zoomorphic protomae, a fragment of an anthropomorphic vessel, a copper needle, 11 block-type axes, 4 strikers, 13 bone-perforators, fragments of altar tables, a fragment of a human skull cap, silex tools, ceramic fragments; Mantu 1993: 51.

⁶ See footnote 1.

⁷ Enea, Boghian 2014: 79-85; Enea et alii 2014, *inpress*.

⁸ Although the absolute values of the statuettes' numbers must be regarded leniently, we believe that the percentages reflect a situation close to the reality.

In Phases A-B⁹ and B the situation is radically changed, the incision is preferred to the applied decoration, which disappears almost completely, or to painting. Thus, in Phase A-B we have incised diagonals in 81.81% of cases, while in Phase B in 89.1% of cases. We note that phase A-B retains a strong tradition of the previous phase in terms of decoration, but the statuettes slowly transform, announcing the changes and generalizations of shape of the next phase, such as painting on statuettes, oblong/slender shape, realism, etc.



We believe the reason for this transformation of technique is purely practical, the decorators preferring the incision as a much easier technical solution than painting or application of pills or strips of clay, the symbolic expression of power and prestige being more important than the artistic expression.

Some of the statuettes depicting young men were covered in uniform layers of crude red paint, suggesting the vitality of the age and the power of the social status.

For the two phases, there are painted diagonals, although in low proportions and percentages: 12.12% in Phase A-B and 10.8% in Phase B. In conclusion, in the Cucuteni Culture, in the present state of research, the incision was used in most cases (70.79%), followed by application (20.35%) and painting (8.84%).

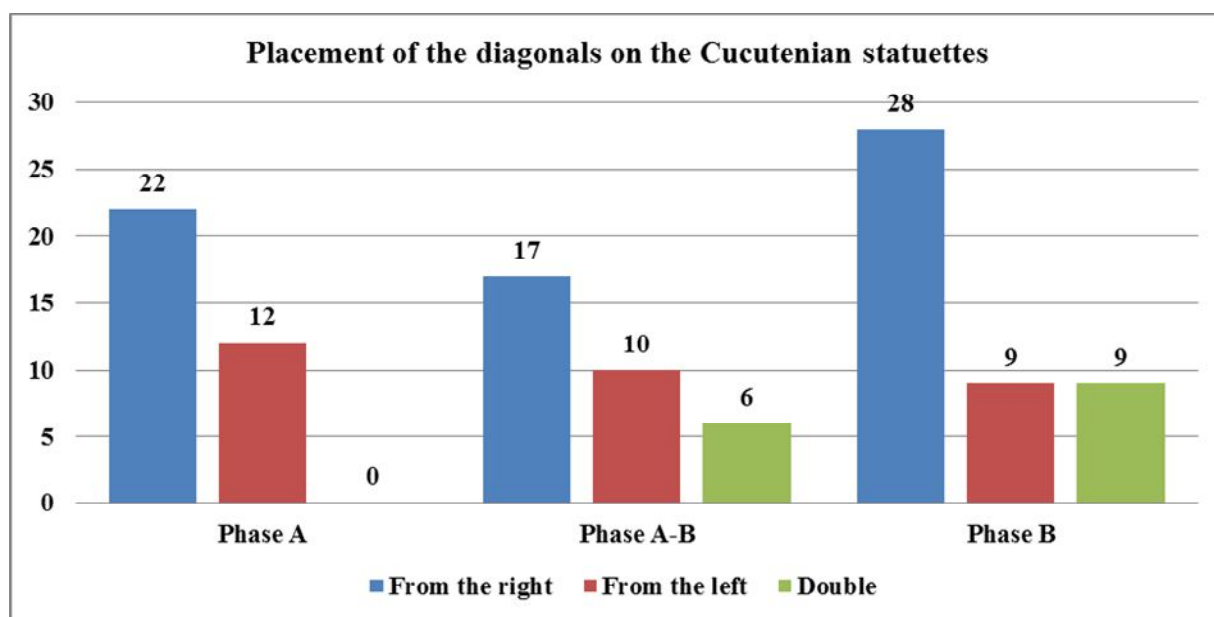
Another decoration that often occurs along the diagonal is the belt¹⁰. The statistics that we realized has a dose of relativity, because many statues are broken in half and at the moment we cannot know whether or not the entire statuette had a belt¹¹. However, based upon the looks of the statuettes identified by us, the diagonal-belt association

⁹ However, for the Romanian area, there are few statuettes from phase A-B. We believe this is because there is a modest level of research and publishing of these materials.

¹⁰ Such decorative elements can be observed on Pre-Cucutenian statuettes too, but it is difficult to say whether, in terms of functionality/symbolism, we can talk about belts as a military attribute or a demarcation line between motif registers.

¹¹ The same is found at the statuettes from which only the lower part was preserved, where we can observe the belt, regardless of the way of rendering, but we cannot know if they had or not a diagonal.

can be seen in Phase A at 47% of the statuettes, in Phase A-B at 39.4% and in Phase B at 34.7% of the statuettes, with an overall average of 39.82%. It is interesting that in this combination sometimes weapons are represented, such as on the statuettes discovered at Răucești (fig. 1/5), Berești (fig. 3/1) and Dumești (fig. 2 / 5.9). The situation of the weapons depicted on statuettes is somewhat identical to that of the belt, the fragmentary state of the statuettes reflecting, possibly, their low number.



Without being certain of their symbolic meaning or a plausible explanation, we find that the Cucutenian craftsmen preferred rendering diagonals, regardless of their type and of the phase of the Culture¹², starting on the right shoulder (59.29% of cases), on the left shoulder (27.43%), or double diagonals (13.27%) (see table 4). We note that double diagonals¹³ appear only from phase A-B (40% of cases), but have a wider spread in phase B (60%). We believe that there is no connection between the place where diagonal starts, right or left shoulder, its' type and the gender of the statuette, since there is a broad diversity in artistic expression, and this kind of gender distinctions are useless, because the archaeological data are contradictory. For example, in phase B, there are the "Moldova" statuettes (fig. 8/5 and fig. 8/6), with the same type of incised diagonal, both starting on the right shoulder and with male sexual characteristics rendered, but one of the statuettes having also rendered breasts¹⁴.

¹² The statistical situation on Phases is as follows: diagonals starting on the right shoulder: A: 64,7%, A-B: 50%, B: 60,8%; diagonals starting on the left shoulder: A: 35,2%, A-B: 31,2%, B: 19,5%; double diagonals: A-B: 18,7%, B: 19,5%. We do not exclude the occurrence of double diagonals in Phase A, but, speaking of incised statuettes, they seem to be incisions separating the decorating motifs rather than military symbols.

¹³ By double diagonal we mean the same military decorative element, but with two oblique stripes originating on both shoulders and connected to the belt or in the chest area.

¹⁴ We consider that the breasts are not a gender indicator in the case.

Also we note that some diagonals end below the shoulder or on the belt, but we do not know if this has any symbolic significance or if this refers to any particular type of military insignia or the weapons that were probably attached.

We are aware that these statistical situations are based on our database, which we do not claim to be exhaustive, but we think it could reflect the reality of the Cucuteni Culture.

The disappearance of certain categories of artifacts at the end of Phase A of the Cucuteni Culture (stamps, cones, roundels, tablets, rhytons, *en violon* idols), the changes in production, technique and decoration on anthropomorphic statuettes, the appearance and propagation of new elements starting at the end of the same phase (type C ceramic, so-called horse-headed zoomorphic scepters, long knife-blades, Mariupol-type axes, possibly the daggers¹⁵ and spears with bone heads, such as the one from Giurgiulești, the development of copper metallurgy) we believe to indicate some mutations and transformations of population within the great cultural complex at this chronological level¹⁶. The archaeological evidence indicates, in addition to normal, internal transformations, external influences from western, southern and eastern areas, observable in the development of regional aspects with innovative elements and technologies¹⁷.

Problems of chronology and possible analogies

According to our observations, the rendering of diagonals, regardless of their type, occurs during the Cucuteni Culture and it extends briefly in the post-Cucutenian period in the Usatovo and Horodiștea-Gordinești areas. Another observation that can be made is that the diagonals faithfully reflect the general evolution of the Cucutenian decoration: incision, applied decoration and painting.

In statuettes from other prehistoric cultures in the area north of the Danube we can identify elements of clothing, hairdressing, body markings, but we have not identified any diagonals, except in very few cases.

Anthropomorphic statuettes with incised decoration in the form of a diagonal also appear in other Neolithic Cultures or cultures contemporary to the Cucuteni culture, but in very few cases (Table 2, Map 4).

Thus, in the area of the Vinča culture, from the excavations at Zorlențu Mare there comes a group of statuettes, including a few with special decorations. On the back of some of the figurines, there are 4 groups of 3 parallel incisions, arranged in X¹⁸ (Fig. 11/1-5); sometimes such a group of lines has been traced continuously from the shoulders to the hip¹⁹. Eugen Comșa states that all the statuettes from Zorlențu Mare are female (from the entire batch of nearly 100) and he believes that the decoration shows strips of fabric used to support small children or

¹⁵ Țurcanu 2012: 14.

¹⁶ Dergacev 2007: 57; Enea 2008: 7.

¹⁷ Boghian, Enea: 2013: 40.

¹⁸ Comșa, Răuț 1969: 8, fig. 3/1-3, 5-7.

¹⁹ Comșa, Răuț 1969, fig. 3/5.

burdens carried on the back by women²⁰, a plausible hypothesis, but we believe that these lines might also be part of the "inventory" of a military dressing.

A unique artifact comes from the settlement from Verbicioara, from the area bordering on the Vinča culture and the Dudești culture (Fig. 11/6). It is distinguished by excessive schematization, and the body is rectangular and nearly flat, with concave sides²¹. It presents on the upper part a diagonal consisting of four incised lines, which could be interpreted as a military or power symbol.

From a cultural synthesis area, such as Stoicani-Bolgrad-Aldeni, phase I, there is a statuette discovered at Suceveni (fig. 11/7), which has a double, X-shaped diagonal on both sides²². The author only remarks in the figure's explanation, that it is a female figurine, probably because it has two small pills representing the breasts, but it is known that male statuettes sometimes had pills placed on the chest as a representation of breasts.

In the late Tripolian area we sometimes encounter statuettes with diagonals, such as in the Usatovo communities of Majaki (fig. 11/9-11) and of Trinca- *La Șanț* (fig. 11/8), as well as Foltești (fig. 11/13) and Pruteni (fig. 11/14) of the Horodiște-Gordinești cultural complex. It is possible that the idea of diagonal as a symbol of power was transmitted to the post-Cucutenian communities in the same manner in which the craft of pottery manufacture, some shapes and decorations, types of weapons and tools were transmitted.

Towards the end of the Aeneolithic, from the much discussed and disputed, but little clarified transition period to the Bronze Age, in the settlement at Cernavodă, belonging to the Cernavodă III cultural environment, there comes a statuette decorated with incised lines in the form of a diagonal (fig. 11/12)²³.

Discussions

We believe that, at this level of the discussion, we can say that the diagonals are mostly connected to male anthropomorphic statuettes, a view accepted by most experts, although not all statuettes showing diagonals have male anatomical elements or the masculine organ represented.

The fact that many statuettes with diagonals have the male gender rendered (*phase A*: Armășeni (fig. 2/1), Dumești (fig. 2/4-9), Scânteia (fig. 3/9); *faza A-B*: Andreevka (fig. 4/1), Iablona (fig. 6/1), Polivanov Jar (fig. 5/4), Rakovec (fig. 5/9), Șipeniț (fig. 5/12), Vorniceni²⁴ (fig. 6/6); *phase B*: Bilcze Złote (fig. 9/1-4), Brânzei VIII (fig. 7/1), Cucuteni-*Cetățuie* (fig. 7/6), Fălticeni (fig. 7/8,9), Ghelăiești (fig. 8/11), Mărgineni (fig. 8/2), Moldova (fig. 8/6), Stina²⁵ (fig. 8/10), Ukraine (fig. 9/10), makes us believe that their presence is a criterion of gender

²⁰ Comșa, Răuț 1969: 9.

²¹ Dumitrescu 1974: 184, fig. 178.

²² Dragomir 1996: 208, fig. 7/2.

²³ Dumitrescu Vl. 1974: 262, fig. 289/4.

²⁴ After sending the article to press, I found the article published by Maria Diaconescu where is presented the anthropomorphic plastic from Vorniceni and contained several statues diagonal that could not be included in our analysis; Diaconescu 2016: 118-149.

²⁵ In the literature there is a confusion about this site, which is also named Stina 4 or Stena, but in fact it is a single site. We will use the name Stina because it is the most commonly used in the literature.

differentiating for the statuettes²⁶. Obviously, if we accept that this artistic representation refers to power, social status, social and/or military hierarchies, we do not exclude that women could fulfill such roles and could have had such statuses. There are probably diagonals also on female statuettes, unless they are elements of clothing, such as on the statuettes from Țigănești (fig. 1/7), Mândrești (fig. 4/13), Rakovec (Fig. 5/6), Costești (Fig. 10/2), Stina (Fig. 8/9), Fetești (fig. 7/10, 11) and, therefore, some of the specialists call them scarves or “*a kind of sidelong scarves*”²⁷, but we believe that we cannot exclude their role as a diagonal. Also, in phase A, one possible criterion for distinguishing the male statuettes with a diagonal that have not the gender shown, might be the separate modeling of the legs, so that we believe that the statuettes of this phase with separate legs can be considered males.

We noticed that in some intensely researched and published Cucutenian settlements, some with large batches of anthropomorphic statuettes, the statuettes decorated with diagonals, regardless of their type, are missing: Hăbășești-Holm (175 statuettes, 9000 m² dug and 44 Cucuteni A dwellings researched)²⁸, Bodești-Frumușica (60 Cucuteni A statuettes and several Cucuteni B)²⁹, Preutești-Haltă (8 statuettes, Cucuteni A)³⁰, Trușești-Țuguieța (190 statuettes, from which 183 Cucuteni A and 7 Cucuteni B, 19910 m² dug, 93 Cucuteni A and 5 Cucuteni B dwellings)³¹, Târpești (3200 m² dug, 10.000 m² investigated, 17 Cucuteni A dwellings and 55 de anthropomorphic statuettes)³², Poduri (14 campaigns, over 1000 pre-Cucutenian and Cucutenian statuettes, but no diagonals published)³³, etc., and this, if not due to chance, could support our hypothesis concerning the hierarchy of some settlements/communities and it could show us that some societies were not (yet) ranked militarily or they occupied an inferior place in the hierarchy. Therefore, we believe that, probably, in the settlements where there are more statuettes with representations of diagonals and other military/warrior signs (Scânteia, Țigănești, Dumești, Iablona, Rakovec, etc) we can talk about strongly structured communities, with a social hierarchy, in which the military part had a very important role.

We agree to the existence of centers, sites specialized in the production and distribution of statuettes, which could provide such items to other smaller sites nearby. Without resuming here the discussion on the centers of the Cucuteni Culture and the hierarchy of the settlements within the Culture (we have a future project analyzing this topic), we believe that settlements such as Cucuteni-Cetățuia, with approximately 1,000 anthropomorphic statuettes discovered³⁴, Costești-Cier with hundreds of statuettes for each of the two levels of dwelling³⁵, Scânteia-Dealul

²⁶ The fragmentary state of many statuettes can cause the lack of anatomical details.

²⁷ Dumitrescu 1974: 261.

²⁸ Dumitrescu Vl. et alii 1954, 403.

²⁹ Matasă 1946: 77.

³⁰ Ursulescu, Ignătescu 2003: 85-88.

³¹ Petrescu-Dîmbovița et alii 1999: 496.

³² Marinescu-Bîlcu 1981: 5.

³³ Monah 2012: *passim*.

³⁴ We counted the statuettes from all phases and campaigns that took place here. See also Schmidt 1932; Petrescu-Dîmbovița 2004: 254-255.

Bodești with over 900 pieces (2nd place after ceramics)³⁶, *Dumești* with its' famous House 1, considered to be a sanctuary, with 12 complete anthropomorphic statuettes, six male and six female³⁷, *Iablona I* with 711 statuettes (701 fragments and 10 statuettes complete or reconstructable)³⁸, were also centers of power, in addition to production centers, as male statuettes with diagonals are significantly more numerous in comparison with the female statuettes, than in other sites. Their presence in greater numbers can be linked to their conflicts with other communities and a certain militarization of these communities.

Given the lack of this decoration in the Pre-Cucutenian art, the explosion of statuettes decorated with diagonals in Cucuteni A (over 30% of all statuettes with diagonals, see table 3) must be placed in relation to other specific elements of this phase: arrowheads, fortified settlements, horse-head shaped scepters, and other symbols of power, which proves the intake of foreign, eastern populations³⁹, and the exacerbation of conflicts between communities, native and non-native, and all these indicate a society that gets militarized, structured, ranked, possibly producing a superior class which rules the society⁴⁰. This hypothesis can be supported by the appearance in Cucuteni A-B of the double diagonals, which we interpret as a diversification and improvement of the military equipment caused by the same movements/displacements of populations, militarization and ranking of the societies and by the shaping in the communities of a distinct group of soldiers/warriors, and these double diagonals appear until late in the Cucuteni and post-Cucuteni Cultures (fig. 11/8-14).

While realizing the distribution maps for the statuettes with diagonals (maps 1-3), we did not notice any concentration of the settlements where they occur, and the grouping merely indicates the areas more thoroughly researched.

As possible meanings, we consider the statuettes with diagonals represent the archetype of the **mythical hero/young warrior**, as known in many ancient mythologies (Dumuzi, Gilgamesh, Herakles, etc.); these statuettes might also be paraphernalia used in the initiations' rituals of the Pre-Cucutenian/Cucutenian boys into virile adulthood, even though they are not rendered as ithyphallic or as involved in cultic scenes of *hierogamy*.

Our special thanks go to several colleagues who, during the writing of this study, helped us with advice, opinions, literature, good quality photos of some statuettes: Dr. Vasile Diaconu, Dr. Sorin Ignătescu, PhD-student Lăcrămioara Istina, PhD-student Ghenadie Sîrbu, Dr. Senica Țurcanu, PhD-student Stanislav Țerna, Dr. Mădălin Văleanu.

³⁵ It is hard to estimate, but during the new researches in 2012-2015 were discovered over 50 Cucuteni A and 150 Cucuteni A-B2/B1 anthropomorphic statuettes, while the older researches mention hundreds of complete, reconstructable and fragmentary statuettes, most of them unpublished. For a bigger analysis see Enea, Boghian: 2014, 79-85; Enea et alii 2014, *inpress*.

³⁶ Mantu, Țurcanu 1999: 18.

³⁷ Alaiba 2007: 110.

³⁸ Sorochin, Borziac 2001: 117.

³⁹ For more details, see Dergacev 2007.

⁴⁰ See Enea 2008a: 5-32; 2008b: 3-21; 2009.

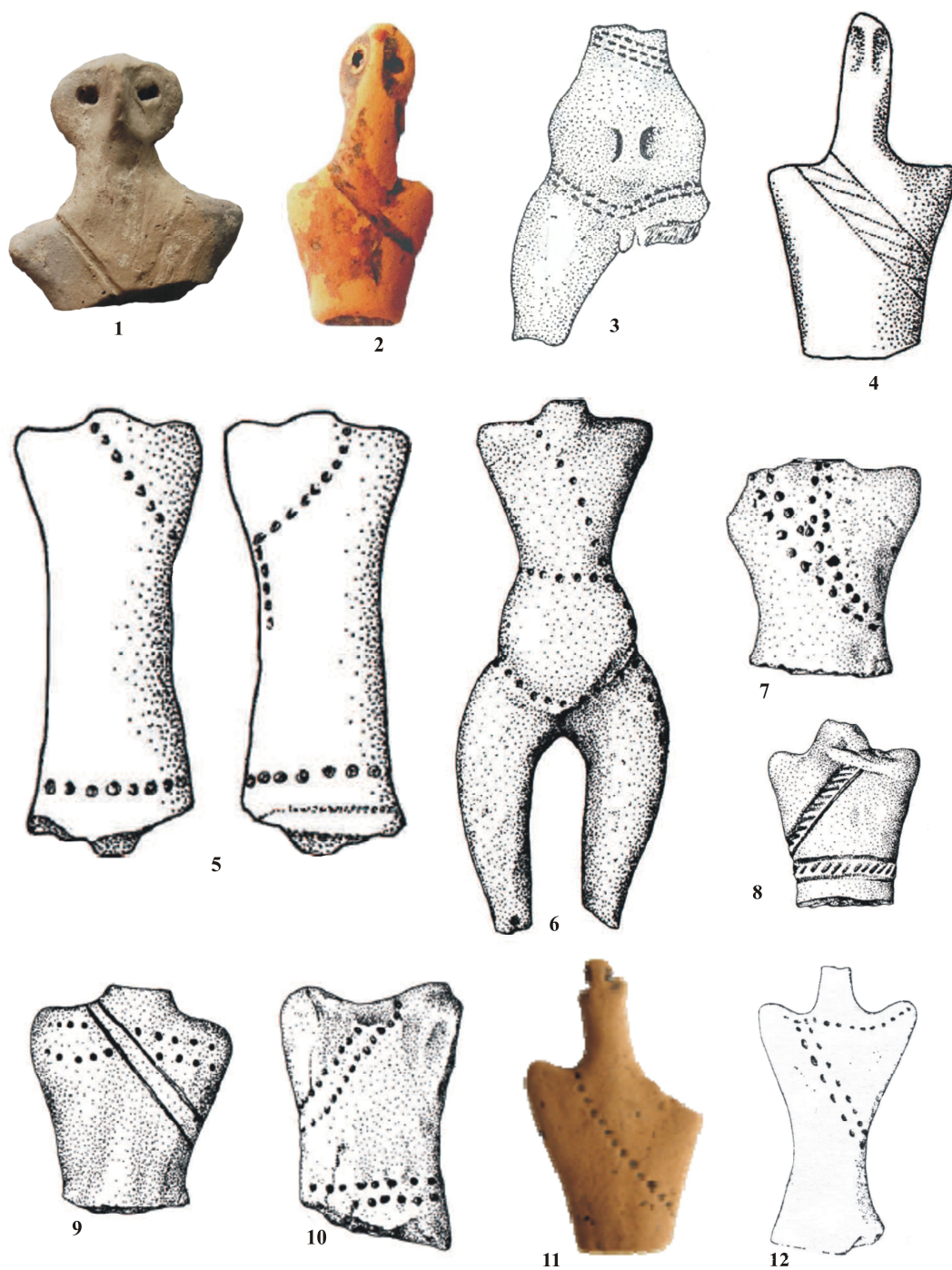


Figure 1. Incised diagonals, Cucuteni phase A: 1 Costești, 2 Duruitoarea Veche I,
3 Obîrșeni-Voinești, 4, 5 Răucești, 6-11 Țigănești, 12 Todirești
(after: 1 Boghian, 2 Țerna, Vasilache, 3 Coman, 4-11 Monah, 12 Chirica, Tanasachi; different scales)

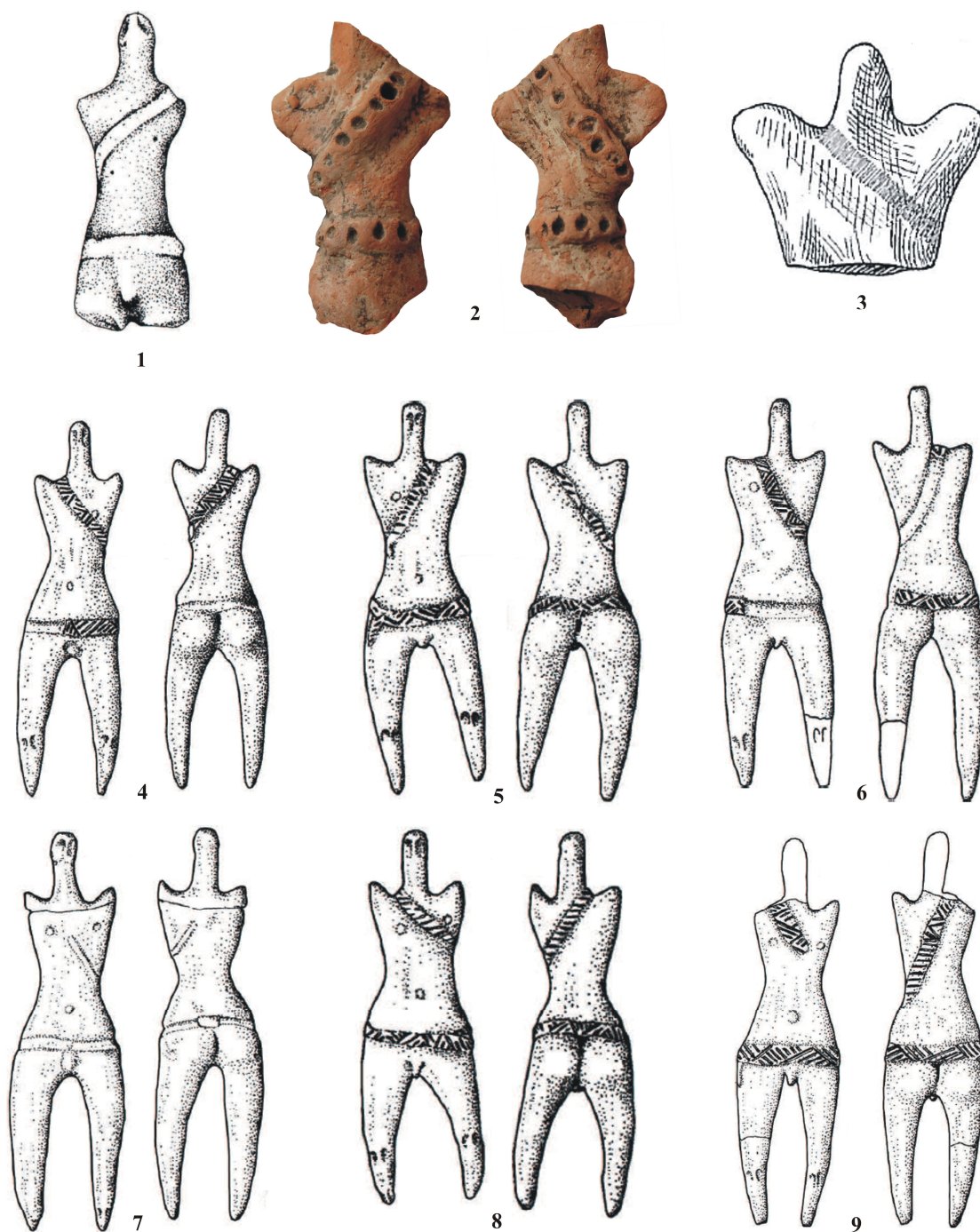


Figure 2. Applied diagonals, Cucuteni phase A: 1. Armășeni, 2. Costești, 3 Drăgușeni, 4-9 Dumești
 (after: 1, 4-9 Monah, 2 Boghian, 3 Marinescu-Bîlcu, Bolomey; different scales)



Figure 3. Applied (1-12) and painted (13) diagonals, Cucuteni phase A: 1 Berești, 2 Bârlălești, 3 Duruitoarea Veche I, 4 Pașcani, 5 Răucești, 6, 7 Ruginoasa 8-10 Scânteia, 11 Tăcuta, 12 Fulgeriș, 13 Avrămeni (after: 1, 5, 13 Monah, 2 Coman, 3 Țerna, Vasilache, 4 unpublished, 6, 7 Lazarovici, 8-10 Țurcanu, 11 Boghian, 12 Istina; different scales)



Figure 4. Incised diagonals, Cucuteni phase A-B: 1 Andreevka,
2, 3 Cucuteni, 4-12 Iablona, 13 Mândrești, 14 Nemirovo
(after: 1, 4, 5 Monah, 2, 3 Boghian, 6-12 Sorokin, Borziac, 13, 14 Pogoșeva; different scales)



Figure 5. Incised diagonals, Cucuteni phase A-B: 1 Kolomiščina II, 2 Krutoborodini, 3-5 Polivanov Jar II, 6-9 Rakovec, 10 Scutari, 11-13 Şipeniţ (after: 1-3, 6-9, 11-13 Monah, 4, 5, 9 Popova, 10 Crişmaru; different scales)



Figure 6. Applied (1, 6) and painted (2-5) diagonals, Cucuteni phase A-B: 1-5 Iablona, 6 Vorniceni
 (after: 1 Cucuteni 2009, Monah, 2-5 Sorokin, Borziac, 6 Eternul cucutenian; different scales)



Figure 7. Incised diagonals, Cucuteni phase B: 1, 2 Brânzeni, 3, 4 Costești, 5, 6, 17 Cucuteni, 7-9 Fălticeni, 10-13 Fetești, 14-16 Koszyłowce (after: 1, 2 Sorokin, 3, 4 Boghian, 5, 14, 15, Monah, 6 Cucuteni 2009, 7-9 Popovici, Simiciuc, 10-13 Ignătescu, 16 Pogoșeva, 17 Petrescu-Dîmbovița, Văleanu; different scales)

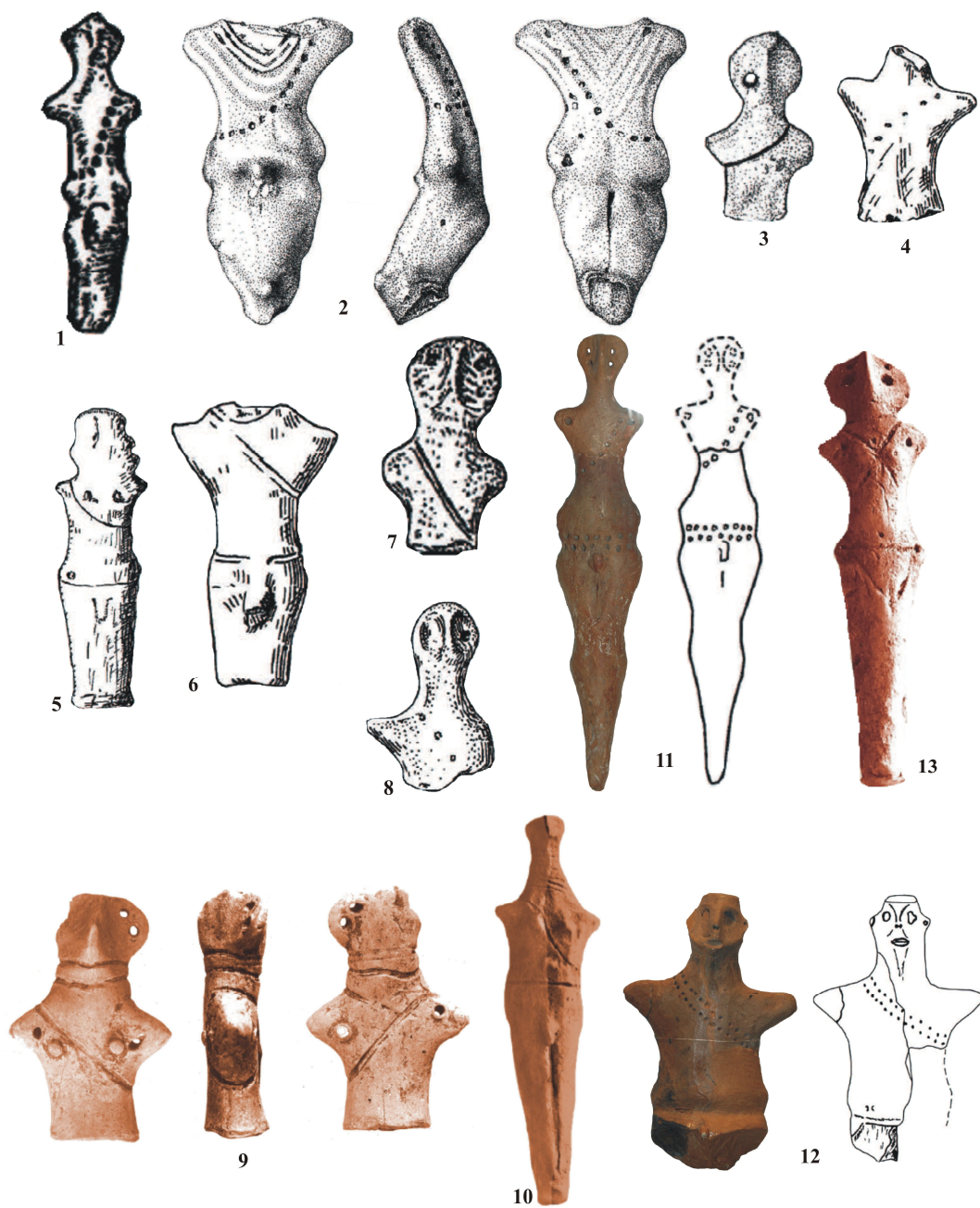


Figure 8. Incised diagonals, Cucuteni phase B: 1 Lipcani, 2, 3 Mărgineni, 4-8 Moldova,
9, 10, 13 Stina, 11, 12 Ghelăiești
(after: 1-8, 11, 12 Monah, 9, 10, 13 Enciclopedia Tripolie; different scales)



Figure 9. Incised diagonals, Cucuteni phase B: 1-4 Bilcze Złote, 5 Buznea, 6 Moldova, 7 Urecheni, 8 Dereivka, 9 Čapaevka, 10 Ucraina
(after: 1-4 Kadrow, 5-7 Monah, 8,9 Pogoševa, 10 Enciclopedia Tripolie; different scales)

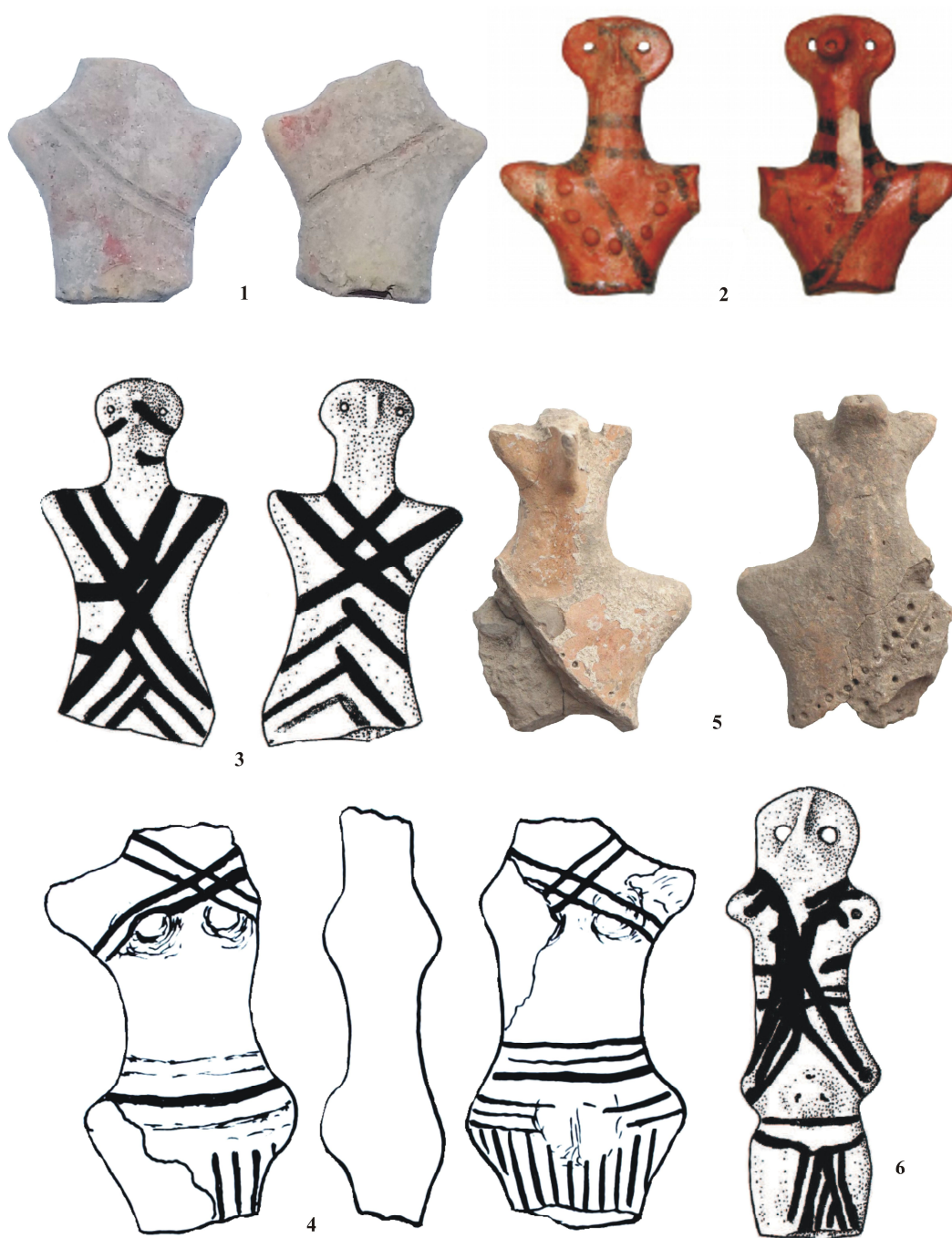


Figure 10. Painted (1-4) and incised (5) diagonals, Cucuteni phase B:
 1, 2 Costești, 3 Cucuteni, 4 Stina, 5 Brânzeni, 6 Aldești
 (after: 1 unpublished, 2 Boghian, 3, 6 Monah, 4 Macapențu, 5 unpublished; different scales)

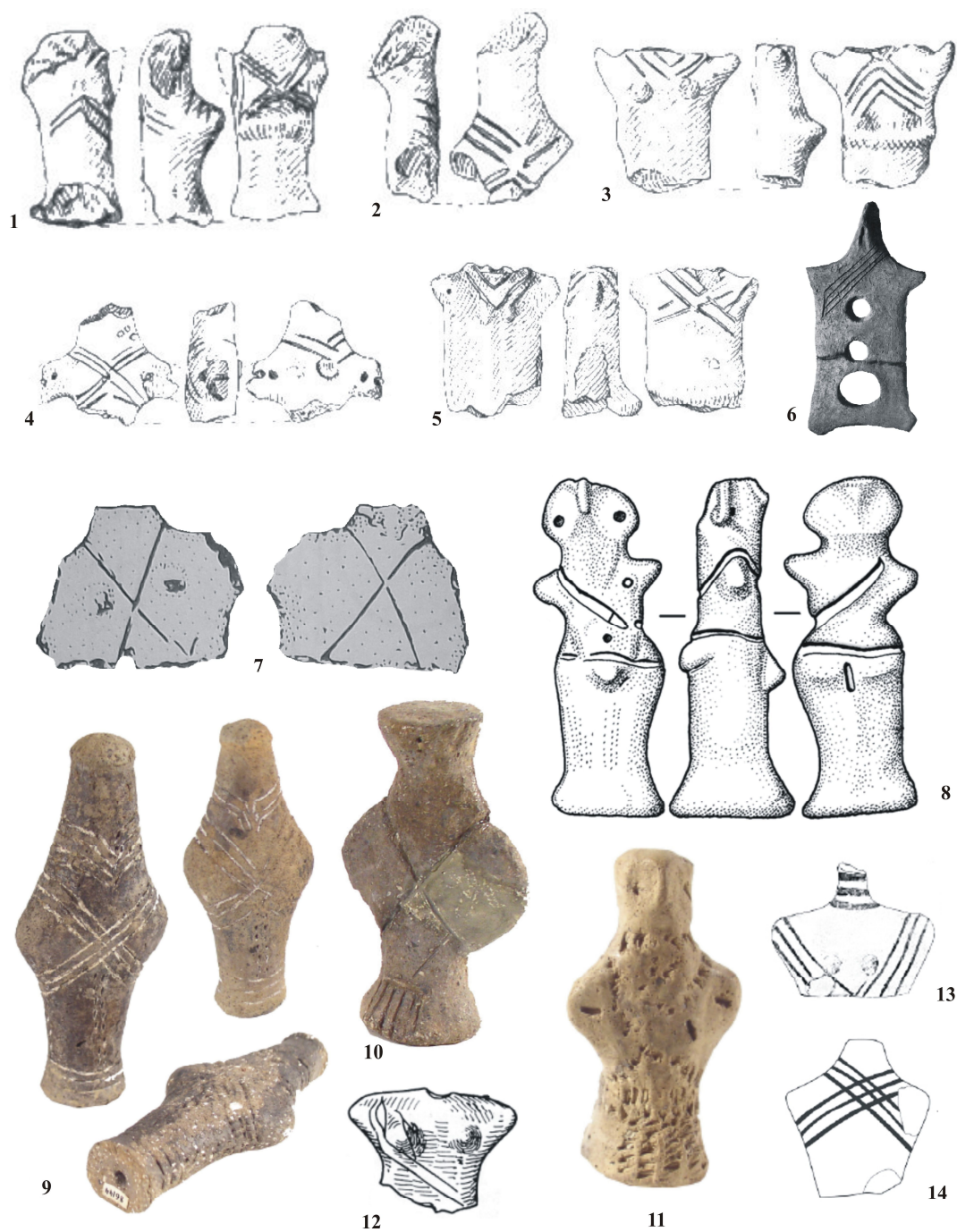
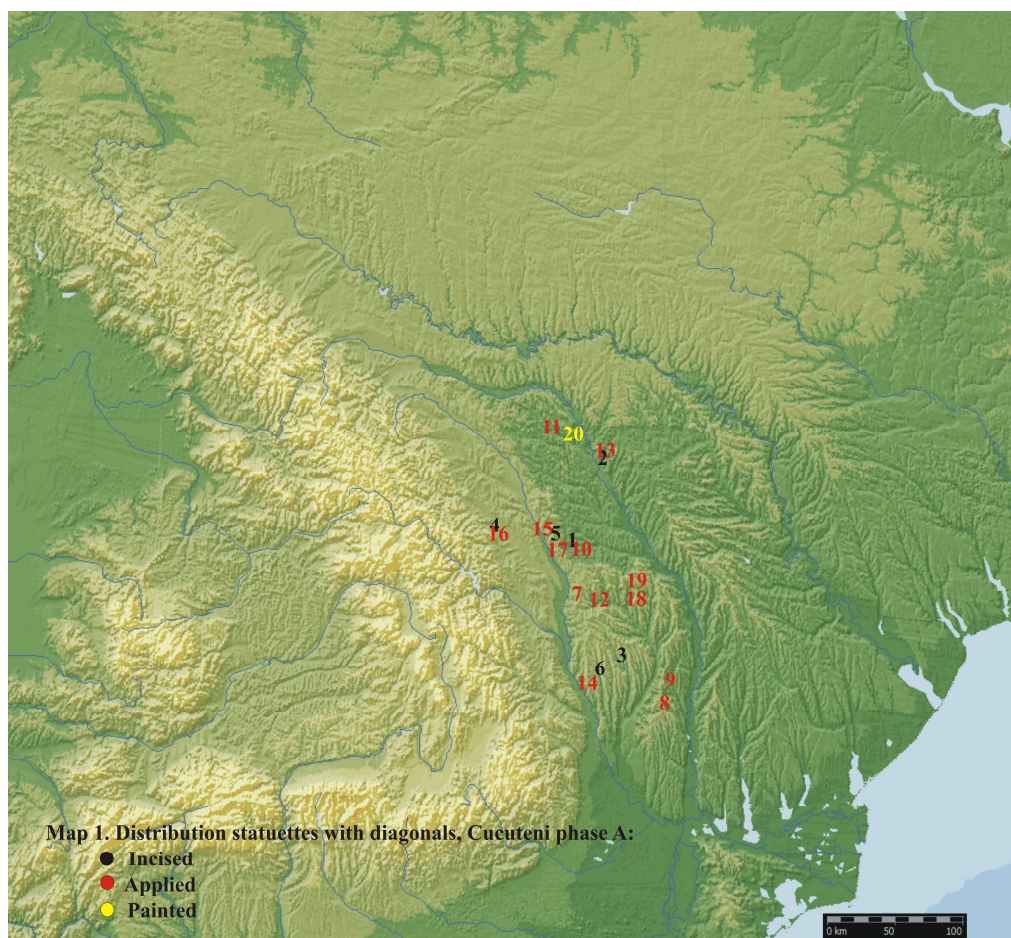


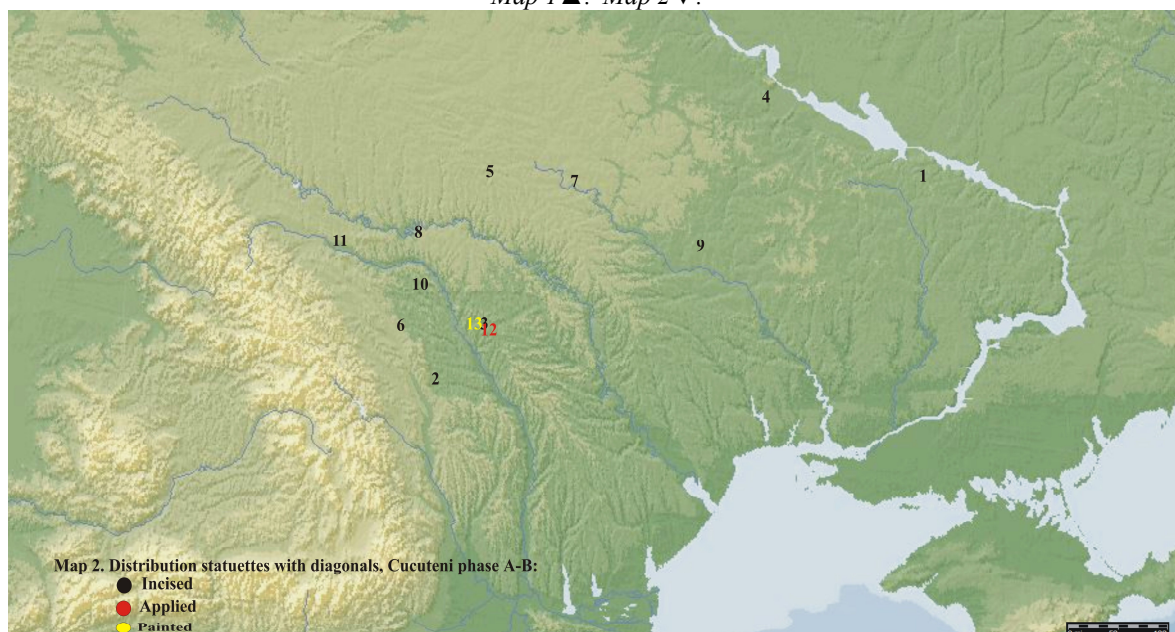
Figure 11. Possible analogies and cultural continuities: 1-5 Zorlențu Mare, 6 Verbicioara, 7 Suceveni, 8 Trinca, 9-11 Majaki, 12 Cernavodă, 13 Foltești, 14 Pruteni (after: 1-5 Comșa, 6, 12 Dumitrescu, 7 Dragomir, 8 Levițki, 9-11 Enciclopedia Tripolie, 13, 14 Țerna, Țurcanu; different scales)

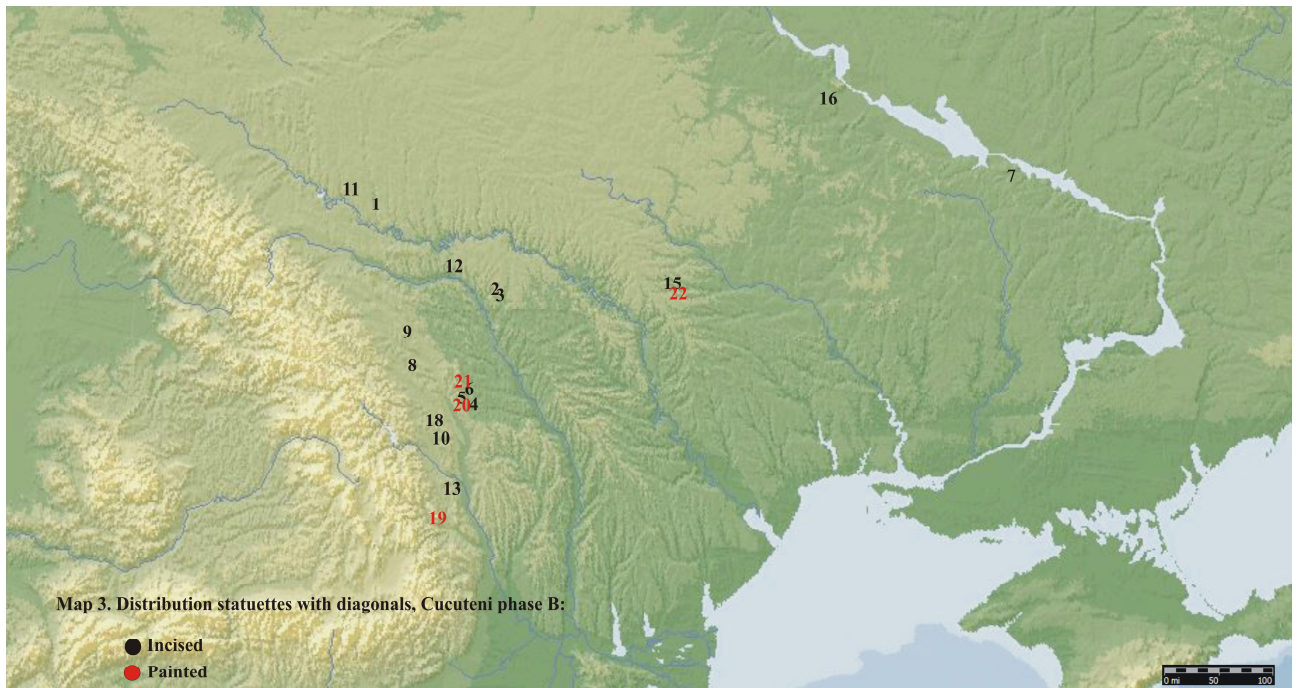


Figure 12. Possible analogies: Ubaid culture (5300-4100 BC) and Uruk culture (4100-2900 BC): 1 Uruk, 2 Antonova, 3 Eridu, 4 AI-Ubaid, 5 Uruk; Early Bronze Age: 6, 7 Early Cycladic II period, Syros phase (2800 - 2300 BC), 8, 9 Hunter-warrior type Cycladic (2300-2200 BC); 10 Female figurine electrum and gold (2600-1900 BC) (after: 3 Hall, 4 Hall, Woolley, 5 Jordan, 10 Anatolian Museum Ankara; different scales)
https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Museum_of_Cycladic_Art_-_Figurine_of_a_hunter_or_warrior.jpg
<http://www.pointurier.net/travel/greece/athens/Cycladic%20art%20museum/#pb300547.jpg>
<https://blog.britishmuseum.org/page/16/?s=ancient>
<http://www.transanatolie.com/francais/turquie/Turquie%20Musees/museesdescivilisationsanatoliennes.htm>

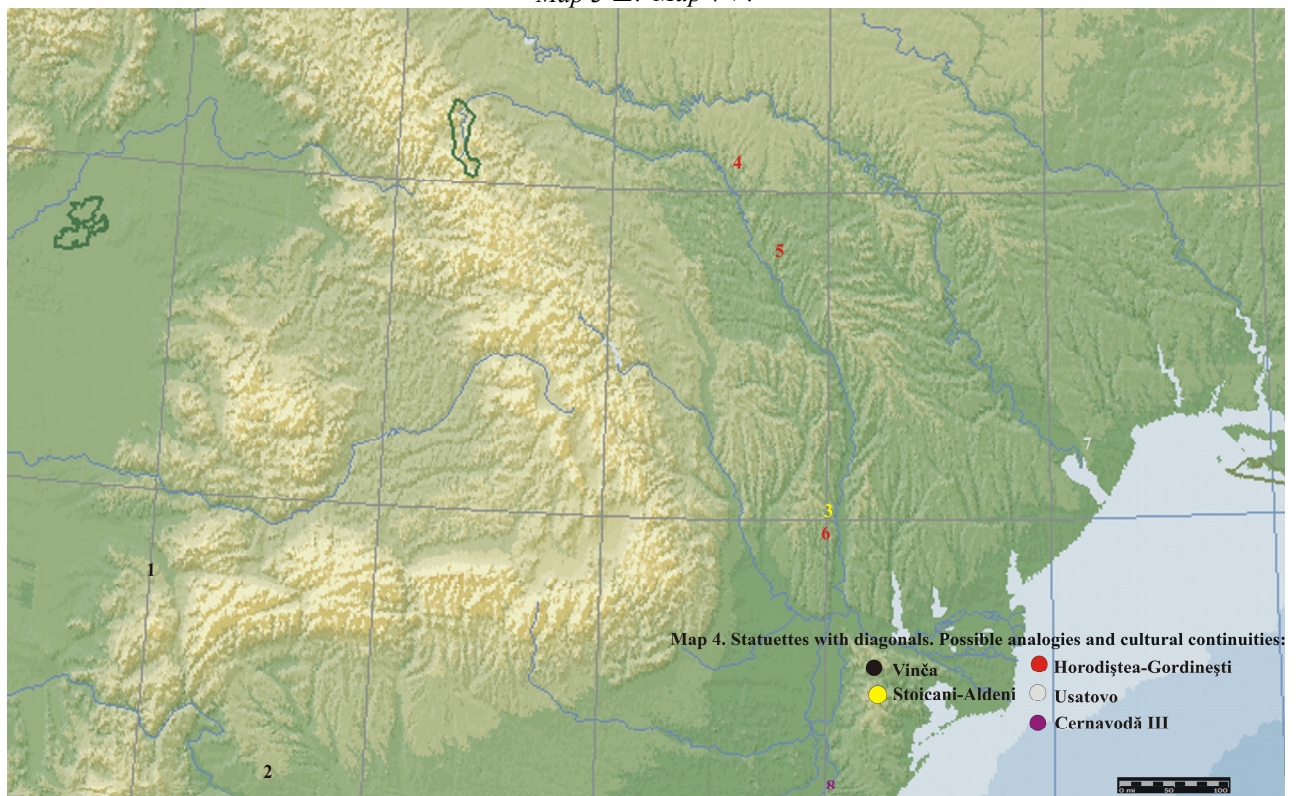


Map 1 ▲. Map 2 ▼.





Map 3 ▲. Map 4 ▼.



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Table 1. Diagonals on the Cucutenian anthropomorphic statuettes⁸⁷²

Cucuteni Culture	Decoration type	Place of discovery	Number of statuettes	Bibliography	Observations
Phase A	Incised diagonals	1. Costești-Cier	1	Boghian <i>et alii</i> 2014a, fig. CX/4	
		2. Duruitoarea Veche I	1	Țerna, Vasilache 2015, nr. 33	
		3. Obârșeni-Voinești-Cuculia	1	Coman 1980, fig. 98/4	
		4. Răucești-Munteni	2	Dumitroaia 1987, fig. 9/1,3; Monah 2012, fig. 36/4,9	1 piece has belt and weapon
		5. Todirești-Piciorul Corbului	1	Chirica, Tanasachi 1985, fig. 31/2; Ignătescu 2007, fig. 175/7	
		6. Țigănești	6	Istina 2009, fig. 40; Monah 2012, fig. 95/1,2; 96/2,3,4,6	3 pieces have belt
	Applied diagonals	7. Armășeni	1	Coman 1980, fig. 105/3	Belt
		8. Berești-D. Bulgarului	1	Monah 2012, fig. 38/2	Belt and weapon
		9. Bârlălești-Sturza	1	Coman 1980, fig. 104/1	Belt
		10. Costești-Cier	1	Boghian <i>et alii</i> , 2014a, fig. CVI/1	Belt
		11. Drăgușeni-Ostrov	1	Marinescu-Bilcu, Bolomey 2000, fig. 164/11	
		12. Dumești-Între pâraie	6	Alaiba 2007, fig. 44; Monah 2012, fig. 40/1-3; 41/1-3	All pieces have belt
		13. Duruitoarea Veche I	1	Țerna, Vasilache 2015, nr. 62	
		14. Fulgeriș-La 3 cireși	1	Istina 2015, fig. 37/2	
		15. Pașcani	1	Unpublished	
		16. Răucești-Munteni	1	Dumitroaia 1987; fig. 4/1; Monah 2012, fig. 63/5	
		17. Ruginoasa-D. Drăghici	2	Lazarovici, Lazarovici 2012, fig. VIII.25/1; fig. VIII.27/1	
		18. Scânteia-D. Bodești	3	Monah 2012, fig. 38/1; 40/4,5; 41/5 Mantu 1999, nr. 408, 428, 430	Belt

⁸⁷² Since some discoveries are accidental discoveries or their context is disputable, we preferred to order the statuettes alphabetically, according to cultural phases specific to Cucuteni Culture, without mentioning the stages. Because we did not always have access to the primary source where the statuettes were published and we had to rely sometimes only on drawings published by Dan Monah in his monograph in 2012, we do not exclude the possibility to be wrong about the type of diagonal, but this cannot significantly change our statistics and it does not in any way affect the general discussion. The numbers given in the table to the locations correspond to the numbers on the maps of the same phases.

		19. Tăcuta- <i>D. Miclea</i>	1	Boghian <i>et alii</i> 2014b, fig. 4/3	
	Painted diagonals	20. Avrămeni- <i>D. Muncel</i>	1	Monah 2012, fig. 38/6	Painted belt
Phase A-B	Incised diagonals	1. Andreevka	1	Monah 2012, fig. 119/1	Belt
		2. Cucuteni-Băiceni- <i>Dâmbu Morii</i>	2	Boghian 2004, fig. 139/2,5	Both pieces have belt
		3. Iablona	9	Monah 2012, fig. 102/7; 103/2 Sorochin, Borziac 2001, fig. 8/1-7	Belt
		4. Kolomiščina II	1	Boghian 2001, fig. 9/19; Monah 2012, fig. 116/6	
		5. Krutoborodînți	1	Pogoșeva 1983, fig. 19/12; Monah 2012, fig. 119/4	Belt
		6. Mândrești	1	Pogoșeva 1983, fig. 13/3	
		7. Nemirovo	1	Pogoșeva 1983, fig. 18/2	
		8. Polivanov Jar II	3	Pogoșeva 1983, fig. 14/10; Popova 2003a, fig. 103/13; 105/2; Monah 2012, 119/2	2 pieces have belt
		9. Rakovec	4	Monah 2012, fig. 116/10; 119/13,15; 131/1; Popova 2003b, fig. 1/a	2 pieces have belt
		10. Scutari-Mileanca	1	Crîșmaru 1979, fig. 7/1,2	
		11. Șipeniț	3	Monah 2012, fig. 119/5,11; 122/12	
	Applied diagonals	12. Iablona	1	Sorochin, Borziac 2001, fig. 7/3; Cucuteni 2009, fig. 293; Monah 2012, fig. 108/1	Belt
		13. Vorniceni	1	Eternul cucutenian 2004	Belt
	Painted diagonals	14. Iablona	4	Sorochin, Borziac 2001, fig. 3/3,5; 7/5,6; Monah 2012, fig. 104/2, 5; 108/4,5	Belt
		1. Bilcze Złote	4	Țurcanu 2013, fig. 140/1,2; 150/1; 163/1	All pieces have belt
		2. Brânzeni VIII- <i>La Sîect</i> ⁸⁷³	1	Unpublished	

⁸⁷³ We wish to thank this way our colleague and friend Ghenadie Sîrbu, who kindly allowed our access to the artifact and allowed us to publish it. The statuette was found during a field survey at Brânzeni in 2011; according to the typology, it belongs to phase B Cucuteni Culture.

Phase B	Incised diagonals	3. Brânzeni VIII	2	Sorochin 2001, fig. 3/1,3	
		4. Buznea- <i>Siliște</i>	1	Monah 2012, fig. 177/6	
		5. Costești- <i>Cier</i>	1	Boghian 2004, fig. 144/4	
			1	Boghian <i>et alii</i> 2014a, fig. CIII/10	
		6. Cucuteni- <i>Cetățuie</i>	3	Monah 2012, fig. 218/7; Petrescu-Dîmbovița, Văleanu 2004, fig. 214/7, 220/2	Belt
		7. Dereivka	1	Pogoševa 1983, fig. 25/8; Enciclopedia Tripolie 2004, II, p. 148	
		8. Fălticeni ⁸⁷⁴	3	Popovici, Simiciuc 1979-1980, fig. I/4,20; VII/5	Belt
		9. Fetești- <i>La schit</i>	4	Ignătescu 2007, fig. 168/5,6; 171/2,4	
		10. Ghelăiești- <i>Nedeia</i>	2	Monah 2012, fig. 10/3; 21/13	Both pieces have belt
		11. Koszyłowce	2	Monah 2012, fig. 202/5, 206/6	
			1	Pogoševa 1983, fig. 23/8	
		12. Lipcani	1	Monah 2012, fig. 189/8; Ambrojevici, 1933	
		13. Mărgineni	2	Monah 2012, fig. 160/15; 181/1; Țurcanu 2011, fig. 7/1	
		14. Moldova ⁸⁷⁵	6	Monah 2012, fig. 140/11; 142/6, 153/12, 161/12,13; 162/2	2 pieces have belt
		15. Stina	3	Enciclopedia Tripolie 2004, I, p. 374; II, p. 503; Țurcanu 2011, fig. 2/2	Belt
					Belt
		16. Čapaevka	1	Pogoševa 1983, fig. 26/8	
		17. Ucraina ⁸⁷⁶	1	Enciclopedia Tripolie 2004, I, p. 482	Belt
		18. Urecheni	1	Cucoș 1999, fig. 65/7; Monah 2012, fig. 187/10	Belt

⁸⁷⁴ We give this orientative name because they were in the inventory of the Water Museum of Fălticeni (Muzeului Apelor din Fălticeni), but the authors of the paper could not mention the precise location of discovery.

⁸⁷⁵ We use this term used by other colleagues because the place of discovery is unknown.

⁸⁷⁶ We use this term for a statuette discovered in Ukraine, Platar Collection, with no place of discovery.

	Painted diagonals	19. Aldești	1	Monah 2012, fig. 146/2	
		20. Costești-Cier ⁸⁷⁷	1	Boghian <i>et alii</i> 2014a, fig. CIII/3;	
			1	Unpublished	Belt
		21. Cucuteni-Cetățuia	1	Boghian 2004, fig. 142/1; Monah 2012, fig. 146/1	
		22. Stina	1	Макаревич 1962, fig. 25/1	Belt

Table 2. Possible analogies and cultural continuities⁸⁷⁸

Culture	Place of discovery	Number of statuettes	Type of decoration	Bibliography	Observations
Vinča	Zorlențu Mare	5	Incised	Comșa, Răuț 1969, p. 8, fig. 3/1-3, 5,7	
	Verbicioara	1	Incised	Dumitrescu 1974, p. 178, fig. 184	
Stoicani-Aldeni	Suceveni	1	Incised	Dragomir 1996, p. 208, fig. 7/2	
Horodiștea-Gordinești	Trinca-La Șanț	1	Incised	Levițki 2013, fig. 16/4	
	Pruteni	1	Painted	Țerna, Țurcanu 2014, fig. 2/9	
	Foltești	1	Painted	Țerna, Țurcanu 2014, fig. 2/7	
Usatovo	Majaki	5	Incised+painted	Enciclopedia Tripolie 2004, II, p. 562	
Cernavoda III	Cernavodă	1	Incised	Dumitrescu 1974, p. 262, fig. 289/4	




Table 3. Types of diagonals on the Cucutenian statuettes

⁸⁷⁷ Mistakenly presented by D. Monah as *Moldova*, in fact it is Costești. The unpublished piece was discovered by a school-boy in the vicinity of the Costești site, turned over to us and now belongs to the collection of the museum of *Ion Neculce* Theoretical Highschool, Târgu Frumos. The combined decoration is very interesting, the incision is covered in red paint, just like the whole statuette.

⁸⁷⁸ Through this table we wish to show that it is possible that the diagonal was used by other prehistoric communities too, contemporary or not with the Cucuteni Culture, without trying to make an exhaustive list of these statuettes from the north-Danubian area, which is impossible.

Cucuteni Culture	Type of diagonal			Total
	Incised	Applied	Painted	
Phase A	12 (35,2%)	21 (61,7%)	1 (2,9%)	34 (30,08%)
Phase A-B	27 (81,81%)	2 (6,06%)	4 (12,12%)	33 (29,20%)
Phase B	41 (89,1%)	-	5 (10,8%)	46 (40,70%)
Total	80 (70,79%)	23 (20,35%)	10 (8,84%)	113

Table 4. Placement of the diagonals on the Cucutenian statuettes⁸⁷⁹

Cucuteni Culture	Phase A	Phase A-B	Phase B	Total
	22 (32,83%)	17 (25,37%)	28 (41,79%)	67 (59,29%)
	12 (38,70%)	10 (32,25%)	9 (29,03%)	31 (27,43%)
	-	6 (40%)	9 (60%)	15 (13,27%)
Total	34 (30,08%)	33 (29,20%)	46 (40,70%)	113

⁸⁷⁹ We considered the origin of the diagonals, from the left shoulder, from the right shoulder or double diagonals, obviously looking at the statuettes from the front.

SACRED GEOMETRY – A FEW OBSERVATIONS ABOUT THE RHOMBUS*

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From a sociologic point of view, the Sacred is the force that organizes society and becomes the condition of its survival. For Emile Durkheim¹, a French sociologist, the sacred – as well as myths and rituals – is the essence of the social, and the successive development of religious ideas is in a direct relationship with the development of society. Scientific thought, she says, is nothing but „a more perfect form of religious thought”².

The manifestation of the sacred is achieved in a certain material and social framework. Contact with the sacred takes place only in special conditions: with the aid of specific cultic instruments, in consecrated spaces (natural worship places, sanctuaries, temples, churches), during well-determined seasons, and it is closely supervised by certain initiated and specialized persons (or it is their attribute alone) – king, priest, witchdoctor, shaman etc. Any object, being or place can become a home to the sacred. A rigorous description of the sacred and of relationships between man and the sacred is written by H. Hubert in his „Introduction” to *Manuel d'histoire des religions*, published in Paris in 1904: „Myths and dogmas analyze content in their own way, rites use its characteristics, religious morality stems from it, holy people incorporate it,

*Part of the paper „*Sacred geometry – geometric signs and symbols on Neolithic cult objects*”, Suceava, 2014.

¹ Durkheim 1995.

² See also Kernbach 1989: 158; Zamfir, Vlăsceanu (coord.) 1998: 513.

sancutaries, sacred places and religious monuments fix it to the ground and root it. Religion is the administration of the sacred”³.

Any manifestation of the divine is form and power. Mircea Eliade⁴ calls this double manifestation of the sacred *ontophany*. Within it, *hyerophany* is understood as a manifestation of the sacred through form, and *kratophany* - a manifestation of the sacred through power. To hyerophany corresponds the religious symbol and myth, and to kratophany – magic thinking and the ritual. The manifestation of the divine can be achieved either in something stable, for example in an object, or as a force, an exercise of power, without the two being mutually exclusive. For example, icons are for a Christian first of all hyerophanical and second kratophanical, because they also possess miraculous powers. The form of hyerophany is the symbol, and the nature of the symbol is the mystery.

In the case of kratophany, the sacred manifests itself as power, or a force that acts upon the world and upon people: thunder, lightning, fire, water, the power of animals, divine attributes. The way in which symbols become efficient as energy defines magical thinking. This type of thinking takes place at the level of consciousness and differs from actual logical thinking by the fact that it operates with a profoundly mysterious element: the symbol-sign⁵.

The first messages that man tried to convey were achieved thanks to images that didn't have a decorative purpose, but were loaded with meanings. Geometric shapes represented, from the very beginning of social organization forms, the main instruments to convey information. Geometric shapes are among the first signs that were coded into a symbolic language, with a large spread throughout the world's cultures. The symbol, as well as the myth, is part of the essence of man's spiritual life, because it shows the profound aspects of reality which escape any other means of knowledge. It is the linking element with the transcendent⁶. The sacred significance of geometric forms derives from their association with religious objects, with sacred spaces or with reality phenomena which have a strong emotional impact on man.

Geometric forms become abstracticized symbols of heaven, the moon, the sun, mother, sex or soul. With the help of geometric signs, archaic man managed to codify notions such as

³ According to Otto 1996: 23; Caillois 1997: 20.

⁴ Eliade 1995.

⁵ Codoban 1998: 97; Dancă 1998: 245.

⁶ Dancă 1998: 227; Mihailovici 2003: 45.

dynamism, cyclicity, stability or harmony. The geometric models used most frequently are: the point, the line, the circle, the triangle, the rhombus, the square, the angle, the cross, the half-circle, the ellipse, the spiral, the arrow⁷.

According to Harald Haarmann⁸, neolithic signs with an abstract character are etched most times through geometric motifs, such as we meet for example on the female statue from Potporanj, belonging to the Middle Neolithic Vinča culture (Fig. 1). This type of idols were offered to the Great Goddess as an offering for luck, fertility or protection for the dead. Some figurines are incised with one or two signs, others with a sequence of signes which represented „dedication formulas” (Fig. 2-3).



Fig. 1. Potporanj, Vinča culture⁹.



Fig. 2. Bilzingsleben, Late Neolithic¹⁰.

The signs from the Neo-Eneolithic are gathered in a database with over 3.000 records, so that they can be correlated, through a mathematical algorithm, according to their characteristics and archeological context. Through mathematical analysis we can see the evolution of various categories of signs and symbols. The obtained information reflects the

⁷ Lazarovici Gh. 2004 (2009): 63.

⁸ Haarmann 1996: 20.

⁹ Gimbutas 1989a: fig. 18.

¹⁰ Hansen 2007: tab. 501/6.

existence of a mythology, conveyed through an abstract language, a message conveyed through graphics¹¹.

These signs are represented either isolated or grouped. Isolated signs show up more frequently on pots and only occasionally on figurines. The groups of signs show up both on pots and on figurines, discs, or other religious objects (sign catalogue). The simple signs etched on the visible part of the pot can represent ritualistic or magical signs, with protective role for the contents, but they may also be decorative, especially when they are symmetrical¹².

One of the frequent signs is the sign of the cross, such as „the cross of Andrew” on the bottom of a Turdaş vase¹³; or a Latin cross on a seal from Parţa¹⁴.

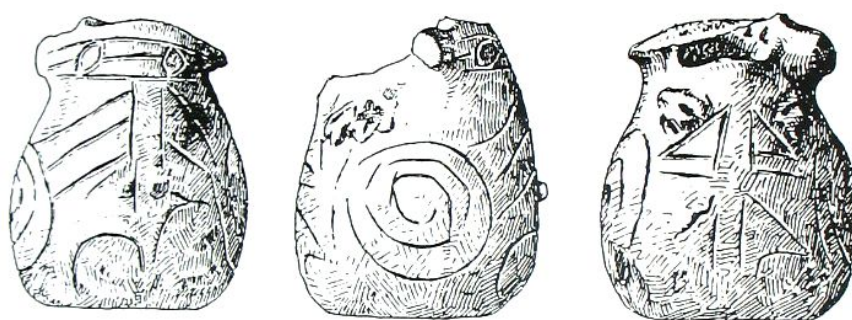


Fig. 3. Cuneşti, Gumelnița culture¹⁵.

Most times, they cannot be clearly defined, especially on the fragments, but since they are simple, they are often times suggestive. „Crosses” sometimes define the human figure from the union of two slanted lines which, through extrapolation on later symbolistic, represent: the left – the feminine side, the right – the masculine side, or in the case of the Latin cross: the vertical line – the man, the horizontal line – the woman.

In the first case, through the union of the tips we get a square (the symbol of stability); in the second case, we get a rhombus. Both figures belong to sacred geometry. The vertical of the rhombus „shows” the direction of exaltation towards the Divine, through the spirit, following cerebral activity, while the horizontal indicates the material world in movement towards the infinite, generated by the internal energies contained in the cross, which give meaning to

¹¹ Lazarovici Gh. 2004 (2009): 63.

¹² Haarmann 1996: 22.

¹³ Maxim et alii 2009: cat. 47.

¹⁴ Lazarovici Gh. et alii 2011: 194.

¹⁵ Hansen 2007: tab. 444/3.

dynamism. The signs are simple, or combined, sometimes they show the human figure in various positions (invoking or praying), with various meanings, such as invoking water or divine goodness (Fig. 4), other times representing the Mother holding the child, or Copulation¹⁶.



Fig. 4. Parța, Banat culture¹⁷.



Fig. 5. Turdaș¹⁸.

On the bottom of the Parța pot (Fig. 6), belonging to the Banat culture, the head, hands and feet of Man are shown through doubled V's. The significance derived from this is multiple and eloquent: the head is a symbol of life, the hands and feet represent the stimulating force and are, according to Marija Gimbutas, symbols of the apotropaic goddess¹⁹. The body, represented by the rhombus, is the symbol of unity between matter and spirit.



Fig. 6. Parța²⁰.



Fig. 7. Selection from the database: symbol-signs (Lazarovici catalogue).



Fig. 8. Turdaș²¹.

¹⁶ Maxim et alii 2009: 143, 145.

¹⁷ Lazarovici Gh. et alii 2011: 194.

¹⁸ Maxim et alii 2009: cat. 89.

¹⁹ Gimbutas 1989a: 80.

²⁰ Lazarovici Gh. 2004 (2009): 67.

²¹ Maxim et alii 2009: cat. 36.

We find, in the Neo-Eneolithic, as a skematic representation of Man, this correspondence model shown through symmetry or assymetry, depending on the message; verticality or a two-register setup (up-down). Man is represented in two registers, as a cross, two rhombuses, circle and rhombus, which unite in one point, leading us to the symbolism of the number Two, on one side, and the symbolic of the number Eight – as a form – on the other side (Fig. 7). Within the above-mentioned biological and cultural framework, we find Man, who, first of all, took himself as a model – symbol of verticality²², a verticality that defines his progress and ascension. Vertical Man symbolises the element of link between Earth and Heaven. This is shown through multiple forms of representation (Fig. 4-5): sometimes the feet seem to be grounded in earth through roots; arms are oftentimes raised towards Heaven, invoking divine goodwill, each with its own message; other times, the head is a „V” (Fig. 8), a form which suggests an „opening” towards Heaven²³, towards the divine.

Of all these signs, *the rhombus* comes to light as possessing a more complex symbolism, thanks to the fact that it shows up in various contexts and has multiple meanings. Formed from two triangles united at their bases, the rhombus combines two opposite principles: heaven and earth, male and female, matter and spirit, vertical and horizontal.



Fig. 9. Gladnice, Starčevo culture²⁴.

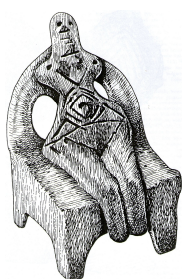


Fig. 10. Kalekovec, Gumelnița culture²⁵.



Fig. 11. Ruginoasa, Cucuteni culture²⁶.



Fig. 12. Ruginoasa, Cucuteni culture.

The peaks of the rhombus are the extremities of the cross, from which it takes some of its significance, dynamism and balance. It is an ancestral symbol of fecundity, fertility and harmony. In the Neolithic, the rhombus is one of the signs associated with the vulva (the Cifer-

²² Lazarovici Gh. 2004 (2009): 69-70, catalog.

²³ Lazarovici Gh. 2004 (2009): 69-70, catalog: Om 15a; 66; 80d; 284; 302; 231.

²⁴ Ruttkay 1999: fig. 6.

²⁵ Ruttkay 1999: fig. 7.

²⁶ Lazarovici C.-M, Lazarovici Gh. 2012: fig. VIII.1.1 and VIII.32.2.

Pác „Nad mlynom” amulet, old LBK culture) or the seeded womb²⁷, as in the case of the idol from Gladnice, Priština, Starčevo culture (Fig. 9)²⁸. The most poignant correspondence is between the human representations and the rhombus in various forms and combinations (Fig. 5-9), because Man has always thought of himself, from the oldest times, as a Microcosm, a miniature representation of the Macrocosm²⁹.



Fig. 13.
*Ruginoasa*³⁰.

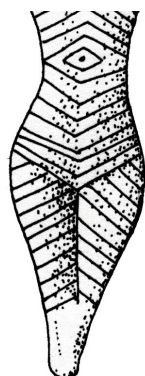


Fig. 14.
Ruginoasa.

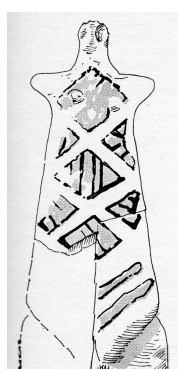


Fig. 15.
*Hăbășești*³¹.

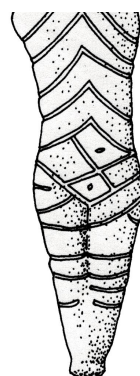


Fig. 16.
Ruginoasa.



Fig. 17.
Frumușica.



Fig. 18.
Ruginoasa.

Man's verticality is suggested by the representation of Eight, which also symbolizes the coming down of cosmic forces and their union with the earthly forces, to then return to a superior level of universal hierarchy. The two rhombuses, or rhombus and a circle (Fig. 7) symbolize the world Above and the world Below: the earth as the mirror-image of Heaven, man as the image of the divine: „what is Below is as Above, what is Above is the same as everything that's Below, to perfect the miracle of the union” said Hermes Trismegistl in *Tabula Smaragdina* (par. 2). The Lower Side and the Upper Side touch in one point, reflecting Unity. This unity is complex and contains all aspects of material and spiritual existence: sexuality (below) and mind (above); assimilation and elimination; inhaling and exhaling. A polarization takes thus place, a transmutation of Man into a world of celestial forces. This is the image that transcends the

²⁷ Gimbutas 1989: 164; Chevalier, Geerbrant, 1994, 3: 170; Golan 2003: 41.

²⁸ Ruttkay 1999: fig. 5-6.

²⁹ Eliade 1937: 134; Chevalier, Gheerbrant 1994, 2: 373.

³⁰ Lazarovici C.-M, Lazarovici Gh. 2012: fig. VIII.1.1; VIII.2.1; VIII.8.1; VIII.32.1.

³¹ Dumitrescu Vl. 1979: fig. 60 and 173 (Bodești-Frumușica).

opposite, through an upwards-downwards movement, which causes the two poles to become one unit, and allows Man to belong to the universal³².

Through these attributes, the rhombus is considered to be that sacred geometrical representation of the Universal Law, where Man is the link between Worlds. All these meanings incorporated into the rhombus prove that this geometric figure actually symbolizes „Creation”! It is a symbol of unity, evolution, harmony and balance. Man as a result of Creation is the union of <matter> with <spirit>, it is an evolution on all levels, given by the energies which exist in matter and spirit, under the sign of harmony between the superior mental side and the inferior earthly side, with a tendency towards balance.

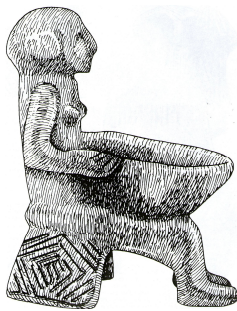


Fig. 19. Bordjoš, Novi Bečej, Tisa culture³³.

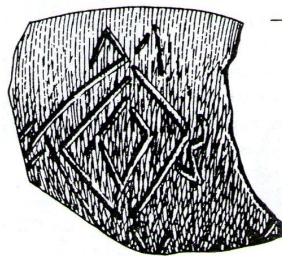


Fig. 20. Falkenstein, Lengyel culture.



Fig. 21. Wetzleinsdorf, Lengyel culture.

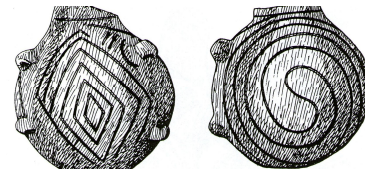


Fig. 22. Kleinmeiseldorf – „Sandgrube”, old LBK culture.

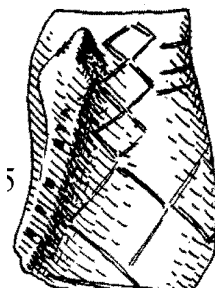


Fig. 23. Turdaş³⁴.



Fig. 24. Hacilar I, chalcolithic³⁵.

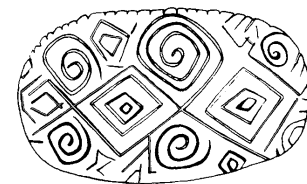


Fig. 25. Vršac Potporanj³⁶.

³² Evseev 1999: 341; Aivanhov 2004: 134.

³³ Ruttkay 1999: fig. 17; 2/3 (Falkenstein); 2/1 (Wetzleinsdorf) and 4 (Kleinmeiseldorf).

³⁴ Maxim et alii 2009: cat. 87.

³⁵ Ruttkay 1999: fig. 24.

³⁶ Lazarovici Gh. 2003: fig. 14.

The cross within the rhombus has the role to line up and balance the material and spiritual energies. Any deviation from this algorithm leads to functional disfunction, in other words – to sickness. Healing means harmonizing and rebalancing the body (matter) with the spirit (cerebral activity). Thus, the rhombus through its attributes was considered, from prehistory, to be a symbol of healing. The rhombus is „Creation” and „Healing”, because it unites and harmonizes something that leads to the good functioning of the respiratory, digestive and excretory systems. It is for this reason that the rhombus is an apotropaic element³⁷ on amulets – pendants (Fig. 26-28) and idols (fig 29). Oftentimes, the rhombus marks important areas for life and balance on idols: the epigastric, the umbilical and the hypogastric regions. Placing the rhombus in key points for harmonious functioning of the body, in the so-called energy points, as well as the marking of the body’s energy pathways (of which we mention the lateral hypocondriac regions) through other signs (lines, dots, spirals), represented on idols, shows a good knowledge of the human body by a „healer” or „witch doctor”, who shared the same job as a biotherapist today. For example, the umbilical area was marked for pregnancy (Fig. 9-11).

There is a series of antropomorphic idols whose epigastrum is etched through a rhombus (xifoid process, stomach, duodenum, part of the liver, pancreas), the area that’s most sensitive to any food or nervous imbalance, where digestion happens and is responsible for the good functioning of the entire body. The epigastric rhombus is present in the Gumelnița culture at Cireșu³⁸, in the Cucuteni culture³⁹ at Ruginoasa (Fig. 13-14), Târpești and Hăbășești (Fig. 15).

The second vital energy area is in the umbilical region, which encompasses the intestinal tract and the umbilicus (the point of “origin”, the center of the microcosm, of the physical and spiritual manifestations, of the transforming energies and of Fire). In some yoga practices, the “spiritual focus” is above the umbilicus⁴⁰ and implicitly above the mesogastric area. Action upon this powerful energy center was recognized even from the Neolithic, as we see proof in the idols from Starčevo culture⁴¹ at Gladnice, Priština (Fig. 9); Gumelnița culture at

³⁷ Ruttkay 1999: fig. 5, 13.

³⁸ Marler (ed.) 2008: cat. 106.

³⁹ Dumitrescu 1979: fig. 60; Lazarovici C.-M. et alii 2009: cat. 96; Lazarovici C.-M, Lazarovici Gh. 2012: fig. VIII.1.1; VIII.2.1.

⁴⁰ Chevalier, Gheerbrant 1994, 2: 377.

⁴¹ Ruttkay 1999: fig. 6.

Kalekovec (Fig. 10) and Cucuteni culture (Fig. 11-12, 15-16) at Ruginoasa⁴², Vornicen⁴³, Săveni⁴⁴ and Hăbășești⁴⁵. The cases are rare where there are two rhombuses: on the epigastric and umbilical regions, at Hăbășești (Fig. 15) and Dumești⁴⁶; on the umbilical and hypogastric areas at Ruginoasa (Fig. 16), Târpești⁴⁷. Even more rarely we meet all three areas marked, such as the idol from Trușești⁴⁸ and Târpești (Precucuteni culture)⁴⁹.

The third center is the hypogastric area. Here accumulate the energies responsible with eliminating toxins and also very importantly – with reproduction, closely relating to the Fecundity and Fertility Cult, so paramount in perpetuating a harmonious life. There are a few idols with the genital area marked in rhombus, in the Cucuteni culture⁵⁰ at Scânteia, Trușești, Igești⁵¹ and Gura Crăinarului. Most of the idols with the “fertility rhombus” are discovered at Scânteia, which suggests the presence here of a “healer” in matters of obstetrics – gynecology (probably a midwife). This place of <creation> (the hypogastric area) has a sacred importance. Any imbalance has consequences over family and community health. The blockages to procreation (feelings, senses) had to be eliminated, perhaps through focusing on the “rhombus” in the hypogastric area.

The human body contains channels (meridians) which transport energies throughout the body, and their good functioning depends, in good measure, by emotional harmony and spiritual light (as cosmic energy). As we see from the proof left from the Neo-Eneolithic civilizations, the people who lived in those times “knew” about the energies come down from the Heavens, which feed and regulate their microcosm. In order to suppress blockages on these energy centers and to maintain balance, the healer (the genetic possessor of biotherapy) cleanses the area and recharges it energetically through various practices, more or less magical. Next were the blocked energy channels for which massage was used (a future study will focus on this issue), with the purpose

⁴² Lazarovici C.-M., Lazarovici Gh. 2012: fig. VIII.1.1; VIII.8.1; VIII.32.2.

⁴³ Ursulescu et alii (ed.) 2008: pl. XXXVIII/4.

⁴⁴ Ursulescu et alii (ed.) 2008: pl. XXXVIII/8.

⁴⁵ Dumitrescu Vl. 1979: fig. 60.

⁴⁶ Lazarovici C.-M. et alii 2009: cat. 227.

⁴⁷ Lazarovici C.-M. et alii 2009: cat. 96.

⁴⁸ Petrescu-Dîmbovița et alii 1999: fig. 355/4a; Lazarovici C.-M. et alii 2009: cat. 129.

⁴⁹ Marler (ed.) 2008: cat. 117.

⁵⁰ Lazarovici C.-M. 2006: fig.1; Lazarovici C.-M. et alii 2009: cat. 96, 128-129, 185, 188, 190, 294 (Moldova Republic).

⁵¹ Ursulescu et alii (ed.) 2008: pl. XXXVIII/3.

of supplying the body with energy again, which is suggested by the multitude and diversity of <decorations> on the statues⁵².

After diagnosis (evaluation by perception of warm and cold places, clarity of the eyes, purity of the tongue, smell etc), the healer (witchdoctor, midwife, etc) would do procedures for eliminating blockages, therapeutic massages, energy recharging, using Living, healing Water (from special sources – springs), magical potions or liquids (teas, infusions, powders) and especially formulated creams, while saying magic formulas, incantations and spells. These adjuvants were prepared, kept and administered in special jars, called by archeologists „cultic jars”. In this category we mention only those with the „sacred rhombus” of healing. To administer potions to children, people used baby bottles (Fig. 20-21) such as those from the Lengyel culture at Falkenstein, Wetzleinsdorf and Anzenberg – St. Polten⁵³. There are also a series of recipients with special shapes, often times unique in the catalogue of ceramic forms, such as those at Palazu Mare and Durankulak, in Gumelnița culture⁵⁴. Special square-shaped jars with rhombus decorations are found within the Turdaș culture and cultural groups of Iclod and Suplacu de Barcău, but few in number⁵⁵. Then there are simple jars, with the rhombus, to serve or prepare food, such as those from the Cucuteni culture at Bodești-*Frumușica*⁵⁶, Mărgineni and Viișoara⁵⁷, or from the chalcolithic at Hacilar I (Fig. 24). At Poduri an amphora-shaped⁵⁸ jar was discovered, used to keep the Living Water, which has a human figure without legs within the rhombus (probably with crutches).

A sitting statue⁵⁹ holding a jar for the purifying Living Water as a rhombus engraved on the chair. This object from Bordjoș, Novi Bečej in Tisa culture (Fig. 19) could have been used within a ritual of dipping the fingers in the Water.

Two special jars attracted our attention! One is from Turdaș and presents a band with an ascending snake (Fig. 19). On the right side of the Snake there are three rhombuses placed

⁵² During Seminars of Ethno-archaeology with the subject “the gesture”, the noted ethnologist and anthropologist Tiberiu Graur drew our attention to the idols of the Cucuteni culture, which present mostly marked energy points, a very important fact to show the knowledge of medical reality in the Neo-Eneolithic!

⁵³ Ruttkay 1999: fig. 2/1-3.

⁵⁴ Hașotti 1997: fig. 95/2; 96/2 and the Solacolu collection at fig. 94/2; Voinea 2005: pl. 72/5; 73/9.

⁵⁵ Roska 1941; Lazarovici Gh. 1991; Maxim 1999 (see catalogues of forms and decoration); Ignat 1998: fig. 64/1.

⁵⁶ Dumitrescu Vl. 1979: fig. 80/2; 85; 90.

⁵⁷ Lazarovici C.-M. et alii 2009: cat. 321, 336, 337.

⁵⁸ Lazarovici C.-M. et alii 2009: cat. 313.

⁵⁹ Ruttkay 1999: fig. 17.

vertically and two (?) (bigger ones) horizontally. Another pot is that from Kleinmeisdorf – „*Sandgrube*” belonging to the old LBK civilization (Fig. 22), which has a rhombus on one side and on the other side the spiral of twisted snakes. We know that the Snake is „a diviner, a doctor” with the following attributes: purifier, giver of spirit by reconciling the spirit with the soul; regenerator, through harmony and balance, is considered „the master of the water, of the vital dialectic, of women (fecundity)”. Associating the snake (phallus) with the rhombus (uterus, life matrix) forms a ritualistic ideogram within the Cult of the Great Chthonic Goddess (Geea) and the Cult of Fecundity and Fertility, responsible with regenerating humankind⁶⁰. These meanings of healing and prolonging life have lasted over the millennia through the rod of Asclepius – the symbol of Medicine and Health. These jars are, therefore, for the preparation and keeping of medicines and remedies (some containing the very body or venom of the snake – considered to have therapeutic properties), as a mixture of materiality and symbolism, and these jars are loaded with the sacrality of the medical act.

To this category of cultic objects belong baby bottles (Fig. 20-21) and the jar from Hacilar, who present etched rhombuses „guarded” by snakes (manders and spirals), as well as the sacred bread from Vršac Potporanj (Fig. 24), probably used as a symbol, therapeutically. These objects – although different – seem to „invoke” the same idea, to „tell” the same story, and through the similar „inscribed” ideogram, they constitute an arch over time and space. Through their magical load, these objects were used for certain rituals where the „ideogram” had a well-defined role, perhaps for purification, harmony, healing and protection.

The apotropaic load of the rhombus, of protector against „evil spirits” results from the presence in archeological sites of numerous pendants, amulets and charms with rhombuses etched, such as those from Turdaş, Cifer – Pác and Tăşnad (Fig. 26-26), or Stoicani - *Cetăţuia*⁶¹. We can state these things with certainty because our forebearers left us „examples” in the idols that wear such amulets around their necks (Fig. 29) at Gomolava (Vinča culture) and Târpeşti (Cucuteni culture)⁶².

⁶⁰ Chevalier, Gheerbrant 1994, 3: 298-311.

⁶¹ Lazarovici C.-M. et alii 2007: 156, fig. Vc.103/3.

⁶² Lazarovici C.-M. et alii 2009: cat. 96.



Fig. 26. Tășnad – Sere⁶³.

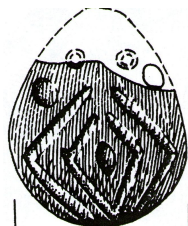


Fig. 27. Cifer- Pác,
LBK culture⁶⁴.



Fig. 28. Turdaș.

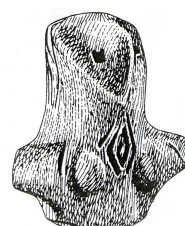


Fig. 29. Gomolava,
Vinča culture.

Perhaps this complex meaning made the rhombus a very often-used symbol over time, both in the traditional lay culture and in church culture⁶⁵.

We also find it in our folk culture, represented through a multitude of forms and colors on rugs, jars, clothes and accessories.

In traditional Romanian culture, the rhombus holds its powerful apotropaic significance, and it is used to decorate traditional linen blouses and shirts, to protect the wearer from evil energies and to keep the cosmic energies that control the vital activities of the body and of the spirit.

(Translated by Ioana Achim)

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⁶³ Virag 2015: 2.

⁶⁴ Ruttkay 1999, fig. 5 and 13 (Gomolava).

⁶⁵ On the ceiling of Romanian Orthodox church altars, Jesus Pantocrator is always painted associated with the sacred symbols showing the essential attributes: **the square** as a symbol of Mother Earth, **the circle** symbolizing the Sky, and the link made by the **rhombus**, as a sign of the Healer of body and soul, one of the Savior's most important characteristics. Here are the names of such religious places: the Sucevița Monastery, the Humorului Monastery, Dragomirna Monastery, Păltiniș Monastery (Suceava), Borzești Church Monastery (Bacău), the „Transfiguration” Church in Roman, the church in Cucuteni, the church of the Peștera Ialomiței Monastery, the wooden church in Bărlăești-Poeni (Vâlcea), the „Sfântul Ierarh Nicolae” church in Costuleni, the church of „the Birth of St John the Baptist” in Călărași, the church in Dumbrăvița (Maramureș), the church of „Holy John the Baptist” in Ferentari, the Delta Neajlovului Monastery and so on.

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SIGNS ON STONES AT THE EDGE OF THE PRIGOR VILLAGE, IN CARAȘ-SEVERIN COUNTY

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Abstract: *With over 18 sites and documented archaeological finds, Prigor village, in the Semenice Mountains of the Caraș-Severin county, reflects a mountainous dwelling which has been inhabited from Prehistory to the present day. In this mountainous habitat 10 stones with signs were discovered.*

The village of Prigor, situated at the Eastern edge of the Bozovici plateau, stands out in the mountainous and sub-mountainous landscape of Almăj Country, as a link between the Semenice Mountains and the Almăj Mountains. The mostly mountainous area, with its natural resources, has provided a favorable environment for shelter, living and cultural conservation. It is possible to say that this village is the present extension of a prehistorical mountain habitat typical to the region between the Semenice plateau to the north of the Danube, near Ieșelnița, in Mehedinți county (Pl. I/1).

At the edge of Prigor over 18 sites and archeological finds were discovered¹, 27 habitations of permanent-living type and 9 seasonal dwellings in the forests². The archpriest lieutenant-colonel Iosif Coriolan Buracu, a Prigor-born historian and deputy in the Romanian Parliament, wrote the following in his work „*Din trecutul parohiei Prigor cu filiala Putna*” („*The past of the Prigor parish and the Putna branch*”): „*the inhabitants of the hamlets of Prigor, Săliște, Sălin, Rueni, Scoc, Ramnița, Iloși etc., ... were Romanian and Orthodox, living in*

¹ Luca 2005, 49, 262, 296-297.

² Panduru 2000, 106-113.

communities according to the old tradition and working in the service of nobles and local kings, fighting under their command whenever the circumstances asked for it, and they asked for it often”³. Prigor villagers, some of them descendants of Iloț villagers, where they own dwellings to this day, remember that in old times, danger was signalled with the beating of the semantron. Women, children, the elderly and their animals would walk towards the Semenici and take shelter in places prepared beforehand. The men of Iloți and other hamlets near the forest would fight the Turkish armies come to rob the Almăj villages all the way from the Moldova Veche sangeac, near the Danube.

In this mountain habitat, 10 stones with signs were discovered. Stones 1-3 were discovered in a group on the slope of *Dealul Mizei*, 3 km away from Prigor, coordinates: Almăj Mountains, 44°55'32" N; 22° 09'11" E; 490 m altitude (Pl. I/2).

Stone 1 is a metamorphic rock, as are the other stones on *Dealul Mizei*. It is 97 cm in length, 45 cm at its widest width and has a thickness of 35 cm (Pl. II/1). Approximately in the center of the stone is chiselled a square with sides measuring 12/10 cm, 5-10 cm deep. There is another intentional indentation in the body of the stone of approximate square shape, 7/9 cm long and 3-7 cm deep, 8 cm away from the first (Pl. II/2, 4). Several geometric signs are noticeable scratched around these two squares. At the edge of the stone, next to the smaller square, a circle 14 cm in diameter partially circumscribes another circle, 8 cm in diameter. Inside the larger circle there is a rhombus and in the small circle there are vertical and angled lines suggesting the letters A and I. Other oblique lines cut through the periphery of the two circles. To the left of the same square is another circle, 9-10 cm in diameter. Under the big square there is yet another circle, 14 cm in diameter (Pl. II/2, 4). The signs on this stone closely resemble those discovered at Gura Haitei in Suceava county⁴ and on the stone block in the church yard in Remetea, Harghita county⁵. The A-shaped sign resembles the one on the megalithic block from Muntele Teasc – North, *La Gruețu* (Harghita county)⁶. The two orifices chiselled in the middle of the stone and the circles as a solar symbol seem to suggest that this stone served as an altar, as did the one in *La Blide*, on the Muntele Mic mountain, and other such stones considered to be altars⁷.

³ Leu, Roșu 2009, 89.

⁴ Lazarovici Gh., Lazarovici C.-M 2011, 104.

⁵ Lazarovici Gh., Lazarovici C.-M 2011, 110.

⁶ Lazarovici Gh., Lazarovici C.-M 2011, 111.

⁷ Lazarovici Gh., Lazarovici C.-M 2011, 106, fig. 6; 108, fig. 10.

Stone 2 measures 67 cm in length, 56 cm in width and 21 cm in thickness (Pl. III/ 1, 2). The signs on its surface are slightly deep and few in number, composed of vertical, horizontal and oblique lines, some similar to the Greek letters *A*, *I*, *II*.

Stone 3 belongs to the group of stones with signs from *Dealul Mizei*. It measures 100 cm in length, 80 cm in width and 50 cm in height (Pl. IV/1). The entire surface of the stone is covered with straight and oblique lines and others which are crossed by horizontal lines (Pl. V/ 2-4). Worthy of note are the cross signs, some chiselled in relief, others only scratched in the body of the stone, more or less (Pl. IV/2-4).

There are some other signs, made schematically and yet suggestively: a rhombus (Pl. IV/4), and the image of a pyramid or the top of a mountain (Pl. V/1). Many of the signs on this stone resemble those on the *Written stones* at Cotârğași, Suceava county and Colți, Buzău county⁸.

Stones 4 and 5 were discovered together on Prigorel hill, 10 km away from Prigor, with the following coordinates: Almăj Mountains, 44°55'11" N; 22° 09'11" E, 796 m altitude.

Stone 4 is a fragment of a bigger flat piece, size 70 x 55 x 15 cm, and is slightly trapezium-shaped. Both sides of the stone were covered with parallel, vertical, horizontal, oblique and diagonal lines. The side that was exposed to the sun has a white-grey color and its sides are chiselled smooth. Its surface is divided in four distinct areas by three diagonal lines. Within the areas there are vertical, oblique and horizontal lines, as in a genuine tally almanac (Pl. VI/2). There is a noticeable difference in the graphic rendering of the signs: in the first and second areas the lines are more visible and more carefully executed, compared to the other areas. There are short lines also in the narrow space outside the chiselled edges. The side of the stone facing the ground is also covered in vertical, oblique and horizontal lines made by a chisel. There is another group of chiselled signs at the bottom right corner of the stone (Pl. VI/3-4).

Stone 5 is rectangular, size 60 x 40 x 12 cm, and was discovered next to the previous one⁹. Most of the surface of the chiselled side presents groups of horizontal lines, criss-crossed by oblique and vertical lines (Pl. VII/1). As with stone 4, the side facing the ground is also covered by horizontal lines crossed by vertical lines (Pl. VII/2). On this surface, the way in which the

⁸ Lazarovici Gh., Lazarovici C.-M 2011, 113-114.

stone was processed through chiseling is clearly distinguishable. First, successively, the horizontal and vertical lines were rendered on one side of the stone surface, probably at set intervals in time, as on a tally almanac. The other side of the stone was left smooth, with the exception of slightly scratched parallel lines, leaving the possibility of the space between them to be filled in the future, in order to serve as an almanac. The signs on stones 4 and 5 resemble those in Buzăului Mountains, more specifically at the peaks of Culmea Broscarului and Ruginoasa-Policiori.

Stone 6 was found on Glanibreg hill at the edge of the village of Rudăria-Eftimie Murgu, 7 km from Prigor, with the following coordinates: 44°54'02" N; 22° 07'25" E, 383 m altitude (Pl. VII/4). The collective memory of the inhabitants of *Țara Almăjului* remembers that there was a monastery on Glanibreg hill, to the left of the river, which was burned by the Turks around 1550. The monks who fled the Turks told the villagers that on the left bank of Rudăria, under the grave stone of a great Roman general, there could be a treasure of golden coins from emperor Trajan. Following archeological excavations on site, at the place called *Comoară* („Treasure”), near the Rudăria river, archeologists identified a Roman necropolis dating from the 2nd-3rd centuries A.D. In 1895 Roman sarcophagi were discovered there¹⁰. Two meters under the grassy hill surface, among the trees, treasure seekers dug a ditch size 1 x 0.50 m and a hole, close to one another, and dug up a total of eight stones of various sizes. Only one of these stones, size 53 x 39 x 45 cm, has vertical and curved lines on it, at an angle, on one of its sides. On the other side there are two parallel vertical lines with the edges bent towards the outside (Pl. VII/3, 5). On the cultivated terrace of the hill, among the corn stalks, several fragments of feudal-age pottery were discovered.

Stone 7 was found on the Vîrșipolia hill, 25 km south-east of Prigor, in the Almăj mountains, close to the Danube. Among the trees there are stones buried in the ground, but also on top of the soil¹¹. Two stones seem to catch all attention: their position is a more-than-strange balance, with two perfectly straight edges and one rounded. The surfaces of both stones are

⁹ In order to save them from treasure hunters, Ioan Rotaru brought both stones to Prigor and they will be exposed in the future home-museum of Prigor village, which will be appropriately called Casa Prigoreanului.

¹⁰ Luca 2005, 148.

¹¹ Unfortunately, both in the case of stone 7 as well as stone 9, we have access only to their photograph, without being able to offer data on size and GPS coordinates.

fragmented by curved, apparently chiselled lines, which are all circumscribed in a large circle, suggesting a solar symbol (Pl. VIII/ 1-2).

Stone 8. In the Vîrșipolia forest, several hundred meters from the two stones, there is a straight-top mound surrounded by a ditch, resembling a cairn (Pl. X/6). Close by this cairn or border marker, upset by treasure hunters, there is a tall stone shaped like an *omphalos*. On the surface of the stone we note a bent sign in the shape of the letter Y. The stone is surrounded by other large stones, buried in the ground, whose edges at the surface of the ground are perfectly round (Pl. IX/1).

Stone 9. On the plateau under Semenik peak, towards the tourist base, at the surface of the alpine pasture there is a grandiorite stone, chiselled square, with rounded edges, size 130 x 135 cm; its GPS coordinates: 45°10'20" N; 22° 04'42" E, 1338 m altitude (Pl. IX/2). On its surface are sculpted two square indentations with 10 cm sides, appearing to indicate an altar-stone¹². In the alpine pasture, from the Gozna to the Nedeia peaks there is a sequence of six mounds, unequally distanced, with diameters between 2.5 and 3.5 m (Pl. X/1-5). Some mounds are flattened, others are not taller than half a meter, and all are surrounded by a narrow ditch. One mound has a stone at the center. Mound 5 is located behind a rectangular surface with uneven edges, which we suppose to be the remnants of an old single-cell plan shelter used by one or more shepherds. From the information received from the Prigor village administration, they represent the border of the pasture grounds between the villages of Văliug, Teregova and Prigor.

Stone 10 was discovered in the area of *Gura Golâmbului* in the valley Valea Minișului, belonging to the village of Bozovici¹³. A cross with equal arms was scratched on the surface of this calcarous stone, underneath which less visible are the letters U and I (Pl. XI/1). The stone is, as the locals name it, a *znamen* or *zleamăn*, which means a funeral stone, but also a written stone¹⁴.

On the Calva hill, located to the right of the entrance to the Cheile Globului gorge, near the Lăpușnicel village in Caraș Severin county there is a place called by the villagers *Znamăn* or *La Znamen*. In 1976, while continuing the archeological digs from *Cetate*, on the Vinești hill, we

¹² We do not exclude the possibility that the square stone orifices were made in order to retain rain water for the sheep grazing on the Semenik plateau.

¹³ The stone was photographed by a group of hikers, next to a shed of the tourist cabin.

¹⁴ Ioniță 1982, 182 – 182.

discovered a *milliarium* (a Roman milestone) in *Znamen*¹⁵. What we haven't published to date, however, is the sequence of events which we went through in order to recover the milliarium. We asked one of the workers why they called the place *La Znamăn*, and they told me that at the top of the hill there was a big stone, buried underground. One morning, along with two of the workers from the site, we climbed the hill on a path leading to *Znamăn*, about 2 km South East of the village. When we got there, I took a photograph of a stone with chiselled sides, fallen to one side and halfway buried in the ground. I traced and dug a box size 3 x 3 m, thus discovering the only Roman milestone from Banat, situated at the intersection of two Roman roads. Towards lunch, while we were digging out the milliarium, the sky suddenly filled with storm-bearing clouds. At the request of the workers, who ditched the tools, we left the place and ran down the hill. As soon as we found shelter in a sheepfold close to the village, thunder and lightning started, hitting close to where we were. As the two workers were repeatedly covering themselves with the sign of the cross in order to ward off the lightning, they told me that several villagers had been hit by lightning on the *Znamăn* hill while they were out shepherding cattle.

In the afternoon, I asked my host mother Stana Panduru to hitch the cows to the cart, and with the two workers we went up the hill to bring the milliarium to the village. We were amazed and a bit scared when we saw traces of lightning, which had hit the ground we had dug around the milliarium. We set the stone sideways in the cart, so as to prevent it from rolling down the hill. I was standing with my back to the stone, about a meter away, and I was directing the workers to pull the cart box, so that we could use a side of the box and the slope to ease the milliarium into the cart. All of a sudden I felt sharp pain, as if my legs were on fire, and I fell on the ground, face-down. Without anyone moving it, the milliarium (weighing over 100 kg) rolled away. It stopped after scratching the skin off from behind my knees and legs down to my ankles. After this, we put the milliarium into the cart and took it home to my host. There, we got it out of the cart using two long, round tree trunks.

As I was busy washing the surface of the milliarium to see what was left of the inscription, mother Stana placed her three year old grandson Mănăilă in the cart box. I turned back right at the moment when Mănăilă managed to take the nails of the box lid out of their place, and he and the lid fell together on his head, on the cement in the courtyard. I lifted him as

¹⁵ Bozu 1976, 187-200; 1979.

he was crying out with fear and pain, with scratches on his forehead, nose and beard, and ran to the medical dispensary in the village. I thanked God that the investigations revealed that except for a few scratches, he had nothing wrong with him.

Two weeks later I was taking the milliarium to Reșița. When the six men, three on one side and three on the other, were lifting it on an improvised stretcher made of long, thick wood stakes, one of the stakes broke off in the middle and I had to rapidly put my own back under the break in order to get the stone into the truck. We took it to the temporary residence of the Reșița museum and placed it carefully in a corridor, unfortunately with the inscription-side towards the wall. The next day, we wanted to latex-print what was left of the inscription, so the museum restorer and myself grabbed it by the sides to turn it around. Without any effort, as if by a will of its own, the milliarium rolled over and – as it was higher than the corridor was wide, it broke into three pieces.

In his book on Roman roads¹⁶, Raymond Chevallier mentions the fact that in Europe, the milliarium stones left standing over time are also known as *the king's stones*, *the judgement pillars*, *the witch stones*. I went back to Lăpușnicel to continue my research of the most beautiful *mansio-statio* Roman building in Dacia, and I asked around if there had been witches in the village. The answer was affirmative, indeed a witch had lived in the village and all villagers were afraid of her, being convinced of her power to place curses and hexes on people and animals. Some of these rituals involved the *znamăn* on the Calva hill.

From the oldest times, almost all peoples used stones as altars, sacrifice places, destinations for ritual pilgrimage, for magic purposes of influencing people's lives for better or for worse. In this context, the association between the village witch and the milliarium known as the witch stone is not surprising. Also not surprising is the sequence of strange and unpleasant events which began with the digging of the stone all the way to its breaking to pieces.

The stones with signs uncovered by Ioan Rotaru in the pasture grounds of Prigor (Pl. I/1), together with older and newer archeological findings, suggest a perspective typical to the pastoral mountainous habitat full of historical significance. The stones on Mizei hill are in close vicinity to two Coțofeni settlements: one which has a moat and defense ditch, situated on Grădeț

¹⁶ Chevallier 1972, 215.

hill¹⁷, GPS coordinates 44°55'35" N; 22° 07'41" E, altitude 307 m (Pl. XI/3); the second on Cozacica hill, GPS coordinates 44°54'94"N, 22°09'11"E, altitude 444 m¹⁸ (Pl. XI/2). When plumbing was installed in the center of Prigor village, in the hundred meters from the Mayor's office towards Borlovenii Noi, workers uncovered archeological artifacts: a crusher, fragments of medieval pottery, iron pieces, human bones, brick-and-mortar walls, suggesting the existence of an archeological site inhabited from prehistory until medieval times, 9th-13th centuries (Pl. XII/9-10). A Neolithic settlement was found in a place called Bă răvișce, on the upper terrace of Prigor river, as it meets the Nera river, 1-1.5 km from Prigor village. Several neolithic stone tools originate in that area (Pl. XII/4-7)¹⁹.

The stone on Semenik peak, the border signs looking like a cairn are located on the footpath leading from Semenik peak to Nedeia peak. Surrounded by fertile pastures, this path passes by *Baia Vulturilor*, where the villagers from Prigor and the surrounding areas come in pilgrimage every year on St. Elijah's day, in order to bathe in the cool waters, believing their miraculous healing power will rid them of pain, infirmity and passions. It is a documented historical fact that the *prayer/ruga* in Romanian (the celebration of the patron saint) of the Borlovenii Noi village church used to take place on Nedeia peak²⁰. The Semenik was also a place of refuge for the inhabitants of the area during Turkish raids.

The Nedeia pasture, along with the miraculously healing waters from *Baia Vulturilor* is a perfect example of what Romulus Vulcănescu defined to be the magical-mythical meaning of the mountain climbing ritual, as an ancestral image of ascension to the heavens.

We believe it is noteworthy to mention the existence of the megalith on the left bank of the Cerna river, 3 km away, which seems to guard the entrance to the healing waters of the millenia-old resort Băile Herculane: the Banat Sphinx (Pl. XII)²¹. The image of the Sphinx seems to have been chiselled in a stone 16 m high and 8 m wide. The old people say that under

¹⁷ Țeicu 2003, 354.

¹⁸ Bozu, Săcărin 1979, 556-557.

¹⁹ The archeological material discovered in the Prigor village proper, at Bă răvișce, was undertaken for publication two years ago by museum curator dr. Dacian Rancu from the Museum of Mountain Banat in Reșița.

²⁰ Răuț, Ioniță 1976, 76.

²¹ Megalith very similar to the concretion in Vâlcea, according to romaniamegalitica.blogspot.com/.../sfinxul-banateansfinxul-de-la-toplet; Trovanitul din Vâlcea (The Concretion from Valcea), <http://romaniamegalitica.blogspot.com/2010/07/trovantii-din-valcea>

the Sphinx are buried the Nemean lion and Hercules' club. We were also informed (but haven't checked) that in the Bolentin village, Cornereva area, in a place called *Cerboania*, on a former road used for contraband, there is a stone or very large rock with solar, cross and fish symbols.



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Pl. I. 1, Borders of the pasture grounds in Prigor; 2, Mizei Hill Stake.



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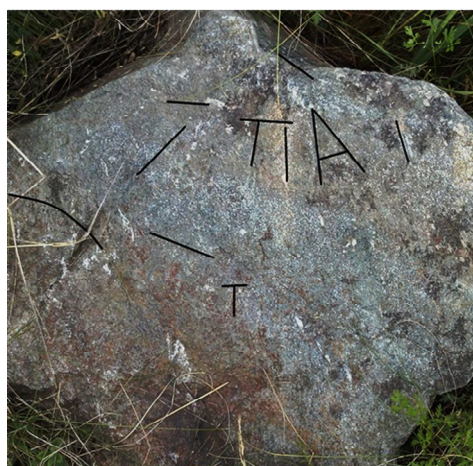


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Pl. II. Stone 1 from Mizei Hill.



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Pl. III. Stone 2 from Mizei Hill.

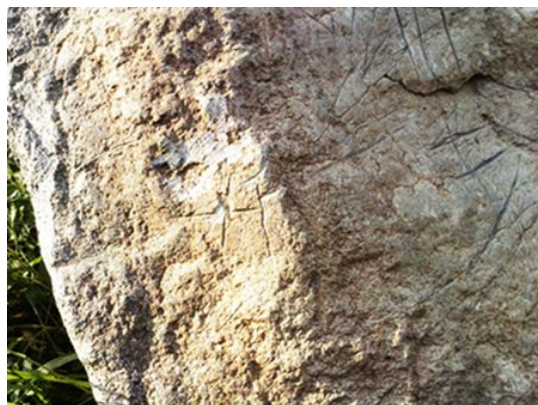


Pl. IV. 1-4, Stone 3 from Mizei Hill.





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Pl. V. 1-4, Signs on Stone 3 from the Mizei Hill.



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Pl. VI. Stone 4 from Prigorel Hill.



Pl. VII. 1-2, Stone 4 from Prigorel Hill; 3-5, Stone 5 from Glaniberg Hill.



Pl. VIII. Stone 7 from Vîrșipolia.



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Pl. IX. 1, Stone 8 from Vîrșipolia; 2, Stone 9 from Semenîc plateau.



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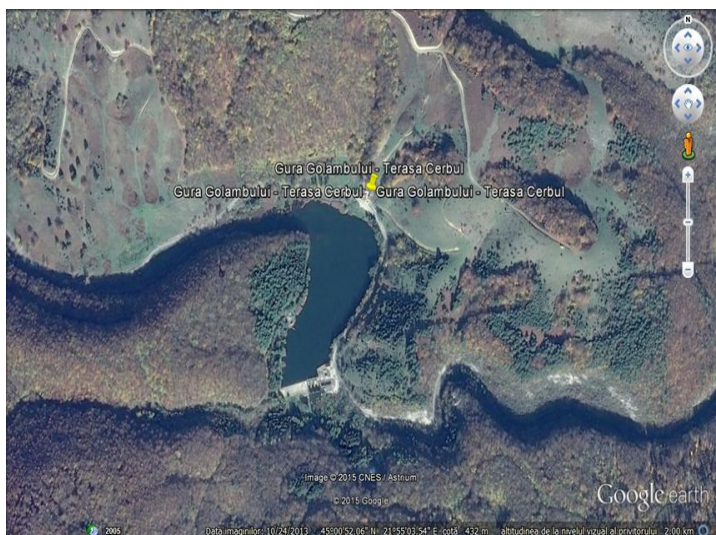


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Pl. X. 1-5, Cairn from Semenice plateau; 6, Cairn from Vîrșipolia.



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Pl. XI.1, Tomstone from Gura Golumbului; 2, Cozacica Hill; 3, Grădeț hill.



Pl. XII. 1-3, Coțofeni ceramics from Cozacica hill settlement; 4-6, Neolithic stone tools from Bă răviște; 7-10, archaeological material found when digging the sewer trench from the front of the Prigor City Hall to the Community Center.

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THE YOKE WITH SNAKE HEADS, ZLAGNA VILLAGE, TURNU RUIENI COMMUNE, CARAŞ-SEVERIN COUNTY

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Key words: *yoke, cart, snake, symbol, myth.*

Abstract

The snake-headed yoke was carved from a single piece of wood. The body art of the snakes is artistically chiselled in relief in two zigzag lines that are set out by shadows and blackened through smoking. A median line separates the two, so when the item is seen from a distance, it shows the image of multiple X's linked together. The head of each snake is carved differently. As a mythical symbol, the snake has contradictory meanings relating to land, house, cattle, cart, which all represent the most precious wealth of the Romanian peasants. It comes with no surprise that we find the two snakes carved on a yoke belonging to the Stan family in Zlagna, in Caraş-Severin county. Their purpose was to protect the hitched cattle, the cart and those that rode in it or alongside it.

A special piece from the Caransebeş County Ethnographic Museum is a yoke for cows, bought from Trandafir Stan from the village of Zlagna, no. 44, in the Caraş-Severin county (inv. 1530). The yoke was carved manually and it has four distinct parts: 1) a double-arch yoke, 1.28 m long; 2) two distance-keepers, 50 cm high and 7 cm wide, which are thicker at the base; at the top, one of them has two fixing orifices, the other 5; 3) a piece of narrow wood, also 1.28 m long, in which two rectangular orifices were carved 40 cm from the edges, through which the two distance-keepers were introduced in order to fix the yoke around the necks of two cattle (Pl. I/1).

The yoke was sculpted out of a single piece of wood, whose edges both end off with a snake. The body of the snake is artistically designed by carving a relief of two zigzag lines, set out also through blackened shadows, which was achieved through the technique of smoking. The two zigzag lines are separated by the relief of a median line, which, if seen from a distance, gives the image of a chain of X's. Each snake head is sculpted differently. One of the heads is slightly

flattened, has an arched snout which ends in a small bump. The small bump, the horizontal lines as well as the lines perpendicular to them suggest a horned viper getting ready to attack (Pl. I/2). The second head has several horizontal lines and more lines radiating behind the horn, which suggest a horned viper with an open snout, ready to bite its prey (Pl. I/3).

Both snake heads end off with a protuberance, which makes us think that the folk artist looked and managed to imagine the most venomous snake in the mountainous Banat region – the horned viper. In specialized literature, the horned viper - *Vipera ammodytes* (Pl. II/2) and the Caspian whipsnake - *Dolichophis caspius* (Pl. II/2, in Romanian, „the evil snake”) are the most feared members of the *serpens* family living in Romania, due to their aggressiveness. Both subspecies live in areas with fields, deciduous forests and rockeries up to altitudes of 2000 meters¹. The horned viper is set apart by its zigzag model, in shape of the letter X, colored in shades of grey to brown.

When we asked the elders of the Zlagna village and from other ethnographic areas of the county what they believed about the horned viper and snakes in general, they told us that these must be killed, for „when you kill a snake, you kill a demon”. It is also believed that the horned viper travels in twos, and if you kill one, the other will trail you and bite you. For this reason, we believe it is not perchance that the yoke ends off at both edges with the symbolic image of two horned vipers. About snakes it is also said that, if they are caught by surprise, they will attack and try to bite you between the legs or on the face. It is also said that cows that are left to graze unsupervised can be bitten on the snout or on the udders, and the snakes will try to suckle their milk.

The symbol of the snake according to Romulus Vulcănescu is mythical, and it unites together contradictory meanings: one evil, hostile to man, as snakes are thought to be instruments of evil, under the influence of demons². At the same time, the image of the house snake represents a protector of the house³ and it is also considered the remnant of a totem-origin cult, the mythical ancestor of a community⁴.

¹ Fuhn, Vancea 1961, 388.

² Vulcănescu 1985, 527.

³ Vulcănescu 1985, 524.

⁴ Vulcănescu 1985, 527; Coman, 1980, 99; Evseev 1983, 140.

The two snakes on the Zlagna yoke are an example of the folk beliefs and superstitions of the peasants living on the slopes of Muntele Mic. The ground, the house, the cattle, the cattle-cart all represent the most precious possessions of the Romanian landworker, whether living in highland or lowland villages. In this context, finding the two snakes on the Stan family wooden yoke is significant. Figuratively hitched to the cart, the two snakes are meant to protect the hitched cattle from evil, as well as to protect the cart and those who ride in it or walk alongside it.

Besides the zigzag pattern on their bodies, both snakes present two broken lines, incised vertically, corresponding exactly to the two distance-keepers. Symbolically, they can represent thunder or lightning, which must not harm the cart, as it is being protected by the two snakes.

On the Zlatna yoke we can find the three main types of the snake: the snake as symbol of the archaic ancestor, relating to man's dual attitude of veneration and fear towards snakes; the messenger-snake, linking the heavens to the earth, and the chthonian snake, with its terrestrial character and profane symbolism⁵.

The largest kinds of snakes live in the south of Banat and Oltenia: the blotched snake (*Elaphe sauromater*, „dragon” in Romanian), the whipsnake (*Coluber jugularis caspius* or *Dolichophis caspius*), the Aesculap snake (*Elaphe longissima*), species which can occasionally reach 2-3 m in length (Pl. II/2, 3, 4).

The legend of Iovan Iorgovan from the Cerna valley talks about an ancient age when a snake bathed in the thermal waters of Băile Herculane and was transformed into a dragon. The local people, terrified by the creature, had to feed it several sheep and a bull every day. In his attempt to kill the hiding dragon, Iovan Iorgovan cut his lair in two with his sword, thus creating the gorge called Cheile Corcoaiei (Pl. II/2, 3, 4). It is said that the valley between the Cîmpușel-Cerna sheepfold and the Iorgovan Cave was dug deeper by the carcass of the dragon, as it was dragged along by the legendary hero.

The geographic setting of the Cerna valley, where the dragon legend unfolds, has been regarded as a sacred territory even by Herodotus, who placed *the steps of Hercules* here⁶.

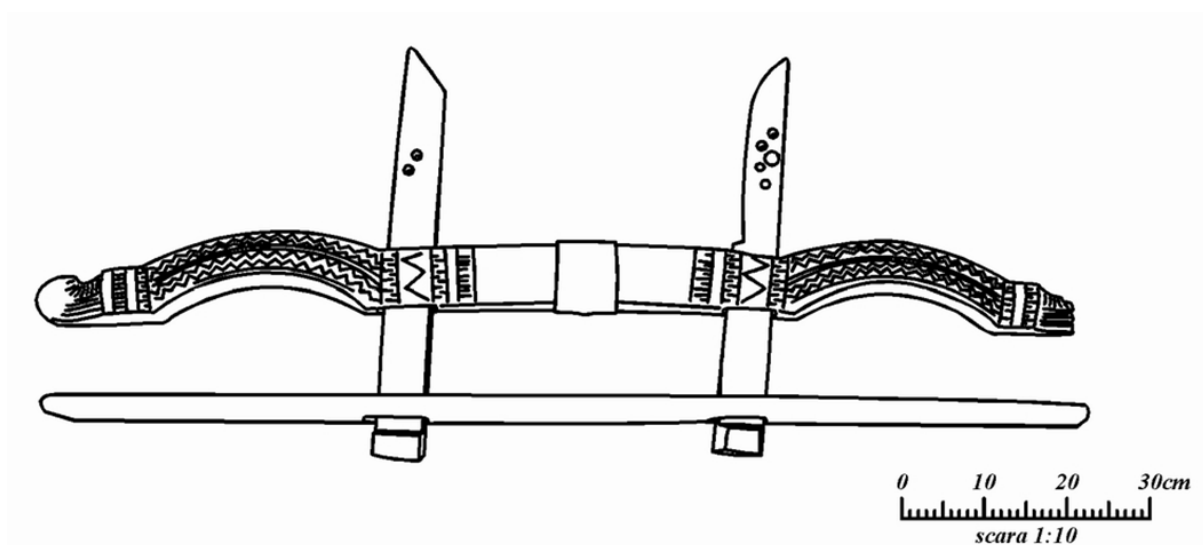
⁵ Vrabie 1966, 149; Chițimia 1979, 186.

⁶ Vulcănescu 1975, 184-185.

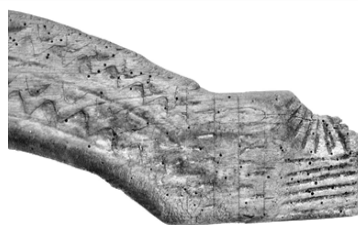
According to Romulus Vulcănescu, the killing of the dragon at Izvoarele Cernei *can only be ritualistic, according to his status as a mythical creature, restoring peace to the Cerna valley*⁷.



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Pl. I. Wooden cattle yoke from Zlagna.

⁷ Vulcănescu 1985, 527.



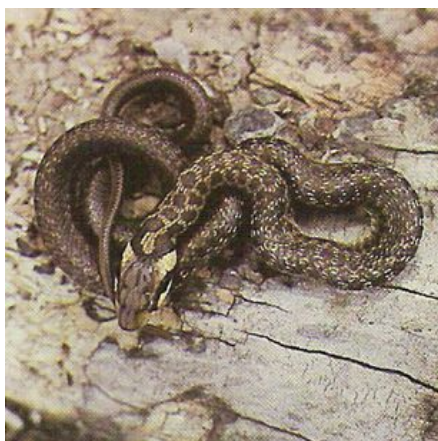
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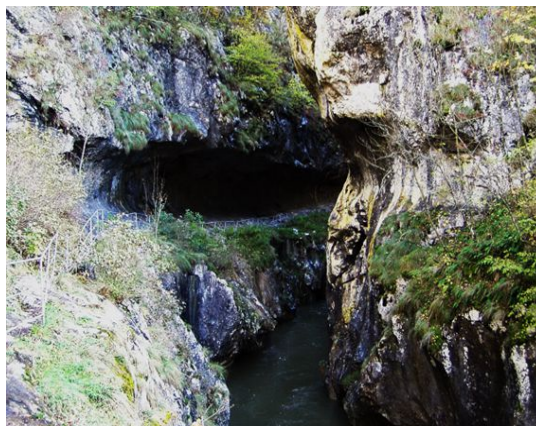


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Pl. II. 1, *Vipera ammodytes* - horned viper; 2, *Dolichophis caspius* - Caspian whipsnake; 3, *Elaphe sauromates* - blotched snake; 4, *Elaphe longissima* - Aesculap snake.



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Pl. III. 1-2. Cerna Valley, Corcoaia Gorges, the mark left in the stone by the mythical snake after it was killed by the hero (<http://romaniamegalitica.blogspot.ro/2010/10/valea-cernei-iovan-iorgovan-cheile.html>).

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SERPENT'S HEAD IN TRADITIONAL BELIEFS OF EUROPEAN PEOPLE

An anthropologist's comments on V. I. Balabina's article "To the Interpretation of Spiral Snake Ornaments of Ancient European Farmers" (published in *The Vestnik Drevnei Istorii*, № 2, 1998).

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Key words: *serpent's head, snake's head, serpent in beliefs, snake in traditional culture, snake's head motif in eneolithic art, agricultural magic, Tripolye ceramic art.*

Summary: *The article is focused on the ethnographic material concerning a serpent's head in traditional European beliefs of the 19th-20th centuries. Based on the analyzed data the author provides a new interpretation of the «dead snake's head» graphic motif of Tripolye pottery ornament previously described by V. I. Balabina in her article "To the Interpretation of Spiral Snake Ornaments of Ancient European Farmers" (published in *The Vestnik Drevnei Istorii*, #2, 1998).*

In her article "To the Interpretation of Spiral Snake Ornaments of Ancient European Farmers", V. I. Balabina¹ convincingly interpreted the regularly repeated ornamental element of Tripolye eneolithic pottery – the V-shaped, sharp-edged serpent's "head" as a stylized representation of a serpent's skull². In the abovementioned article V. I. Balabina compares the serpent-skull drawing with the motif of the ancient European farmers' spiral ornament, stating both the general similarity of the latter to the anatomic profile of a serpent's skull and the specific likeness between certain features such as the shape of eye-pits. V. I. Balabina notices that "in the graphic tradition of European farmers, the snake is the only zoomorphic image, which has its head's skull-shape emphasized"³. In her interpretation of the snake's skull images, the author supposes that «this can mean a snake with a «dead head» or a symmetric pair of such snakes», and names a selection of pottery works decorated with images of a pair of crawling snakes dating back to the Neolithic-Bronze age in eastern Mediterranean (Anatolia, the Aegean Sea region) and in Eastern

¹ Балабина 1998.

² Балабина 1998: 140-143.

Europe, to illustrate similar representations⁴. V.I. Balabina also convincingly demonstrates that “ancient European farmers’ cosmology, of which all the interpretations have always been merely reconstructive, was not verbally recorded, and apparently there can only be fragmentary correlation with the later traditions”. The author states that “images of “dead snakes” in mythology are extremely rare. They are only found in several Australian myths as a representation of a male, not female character”⁵. Further on the author develops a hypothesis of the semantic similarity of “dead snake’s head” images on Tripolyan ceramics with the images of “ancient Greek horrendous serpent goddesses” such as Medusa and Hecate⁶.

Agreeing with V. I. Balabina’s reasoning and conclusions in general, we suggest that Balkan, East- and Central-European ethnographic material dating back to the 19th -20th centuries, which uncovers certain aspects of beliefs concerning the snake head qualities in the contemporary tradition of these European regions⁷, shows more semantic similarity and is generally more relevant to the interpretation of this motif than ancient Greek and Australian myths. The custom to bury an innocuous serpent’s head under the threshold so that it should bring happiness was widespread in ancient Greece. Pliny wrote that an innocuous serpent’s head, buried under the threshold should bring happiness into the house⁸. Among the contemporary peoples of Europe a serpent’s head is frequently used as apotropaion (phylactery) along with using it in spring agricultural magic rites. In Finland the snake’s head nailed to the house wall protects the dwelling against witches and bugs⁹. According to Croatian beliefs, if the serpent’s head cut off before St. George’s day (23 April / 6 May), is buried beside a child’s cradle, it will keep the good (Bozhiakovina)¹⁰. The Elbasani Albanese, before planting olive trees, dig a snake’s head in the ground, in belief that it will boost the fertility of saplings¹¹. The Bulgarians put a serpent’s head into the seeds to make provision for good harvest¹². The Bulgarians of Sliven district pour milk through the head of a serpent killed on the eve of St. George’s day, so that witches couldn’t take milk from their cows (Kotel locality)¹³. For plenteous harvest in certain places people sift the seeds they intend to plant through the head of a serpent, killed in the time period between the Assumption Day and Nativity of Mary (15/28

³ Балабина 1998: 150.

⁴ Балабина 1998: 149-150.

⁵ Балабина 1998: 151.

⁶ Балабина 1998: 151. The evolution of this motif in Tripolye-Cucuteni pottery ornament was subsequently investigated by Russian archaeologist I.V. Palaguta: Палагута, 1999; Палагута, 2009, and other works.

⁷ An important ethnographic material on Slavic beliefs and rites, concerning a serpent’s head, was completed and published by Russian ethnographer specializing in Slavic tradition, A.V. Gura: Гуря, 1997.

⁸ Pliny. *Naturalis Historia*. XXIX, 67.

⁹ Hoffmann-Krayer, 1935-36: 1154.

¹⁰ Hirc 1896: 10-11.

¹¹ Златковская 1974: 100.

¹² Златковская 1974: 99.

¹³ Беновска-Събкова 1992: 34.

August – 8/21 September)¹⁴. The Croatians place the head of the snake, caught before St. George's day, in the bunk for the cattle to be nourished well. (Bozhiakovina)¹⁵, they also may put it into the seeds during the sow period to ensure a successful harvest (Krizhevtsy locality, Zaistovets)¹⁶. Here a clear analogy with the ancient Greeks' serpent-concerning beliefs can be traced - the participants of Dionysian rites kept a snake in the winnow (*liknon*), obviously, as a fertility symbol¹⁷. According to Croatian beliefs if a boar is given a serpent's head to eat instead of bread before the sunset, it will make the animal furious like a serpent, and no one will be able to beat it (Bielovar)¹⁸. The Serbs of Ljeskovac district, while drifting the cattle through «alive fire», brother and sister, bearing similar names (Vasilko and Vaska, Stoyan and Stana, etc.) touch («prick») each passing cow or sheep with an alive serpent's head and a singed burr¹⁹. Croatian traditional medicine as a remedy for epilepsy advises to wrap an alive snake round the patient's neck, then cut off its head and place this head inside the chimney, and then the disease will go. It is also believed that the patient must be fumed by the «seed» (*sjemenom*), which leaks from the dead serpent's head (Statinik, Podvinye pod Brodom)²⁰. In German folk medicine a snake's head was used as a remedy against several diseases²¹. According to the Germans' beliefs a serpent's head protects one from witchcraft and the Swiss superstition runs that it brings luck in card play²². The Croatians believe that certain parts of a serpent's head can even dispel fog: "If one cuts off the head of the snake, which was caught before the Annunciation, takes its "pouches" and "seed" (*metne u sjeme*), while they are fresh²³, it would dispel fog" (Stupovača, Vukovo pod Kutinoy)²⁴. In Serbian beliefs a serpent's head continues to live a life of its own and can make mischief even after it is separated from the body. It is thought to dwell in a cow's or ram's horn and do harm (*uyedat' – to eat up*) to men and cattle. There are stories about a snake's head, which lived in a ram's horn, ate much cattle owned by a peasant, who finally found it there and killed²⁵. According to Bulgarian beliefs a monstrous creature *Lamia* emerges from a serpent's head²⁶.

In Slavic beliefs a snake's head is used as a magic tool, often alongside with sprouts of garlic, onions, peas, beans, and other plants seeds or sprouts. It could be used to identify witches, make lands

¹⁴ Георгиева, 1993: 59; Гура, 1997: 329.

¹⁵ Ђорђевић 1958: 183.

¹⁶ Ђорђевић 1958: 183; Гура 1997: 329.

¹⁷ Иванов 2000: 111.

¹⁸ Hirc 1896: 10-11.

¹⁹ Ђорђевић 1958: 169; Гура 1997: 329.

²⁰ Hirc 1896: 10-11.

²¹ Novorka, Kronfeld 1908: 322; Hoffmann-Krayer 1935-36: 1168.

²² Hoffmann-Krayer 1935-36: 1153.

²³ The meaning of *metne u sjeme* is dual: it can refer to either male-serpent genitalia or poisonous organs of the serpent's head.

²⁴ Hirc 1896: 10-11.

²⁵ Дучић 1931: 337.

²⁶ Strausz 1898: 163.

fertile, acquire control over wild animals or power of invisibility. The Bulgarians of the Stara Planina area grow basil seeds from the head of a snake caught on the Annunciation (25 March / 7 April) to later apply them in love magic. Young women use such basil to look more attractive. Besides, this basil is considered a curative herb, protects and enables one to identify evil spirit (Sofia region)²⁷. In various regions of Bulgaria magic properties are attributed to other plants grown in the same way, e.g. onions sprouted from a serpent's head should be eaten by a woman whose children are dying, wheat is essential for sick animals, the number of beans grown this way can predict the number of children a woman is destined to give birth to²⁸. A childless Bulgarian woman on St George's Day cuts off a snake's head, inserts a bean there and puts the head in a tree hollow growing somewhere far from the village where it is impossible to catch a cockcrow. In case the bean sprouts, the woman will get pregnant²⁹. In Serbian beliefs, with the help of garlic sprouted from a snake's head it is possible to identify a witch in a crowd of worshipers in a church. To achieve this goal, one should kill a snake before the Annunciation, plant and grow a garlic bulb in the snake's head, then on the Annunciation Day, at Easter or on St. Peter's Day (29 June / 12 July) go to the church with the garlic top or clove placed behind the hat flap (Serbia, Bosnia, Vlasenica), sewn inside the waist belt (the east. Serbia, Svrlig), in an amulet (the West of Serbia, Valjevo), or placed under the tongue (Šumadija). All the witches present shall clutter and try to grab the garlic³⁰. In Dalmatia a pea flower, grown in the same way, is placed behind the hat flap for the same purpose. According to Serbian beliefs, some garlic sprouted through a snake's head enables one to see the devil without being noticed by him. In this case the devil will make all the desires come true³¹. A garlic top or clove is worn by the Serbs as an amulet to ward off witches (Valjevo), to protect oneself from witches and evil spirits (Serbia, Sabac region) or from diseases (the Rudnik mountain area)³², or to bewitch women (Brod area). The Macedonians believe that a pea, sprouted through a snake's head, protects against snakebites, and helps spinsters and old bachelors to find a spouse (Skopje area). The South Slavs also use other plants grown in the same way: they touch someone they want to bewitch with a wheat grain (Bosnia?), an epileptic person should be fumed with seeds (Brod area), hemp is used to bind a whip for driving cattle to the market to sell it easier and with greater profit. (Croatia, Daruvar, Suhopolje)³³. The Croats of the Istria peninsula mill beans grown in a snake's head and bake round bread used to check the virginity of the bride before the wedding ceremony. The bread is brought close to the bride's face, and if she was not a virgin, snakes

²⁷ Георгиева 1993: 101, note 360; Гура 1997: 330.

²⁸ Георгиева 1993: 101, note 360; Гура 1997: 330.

²⁹ Strausz 1898: 337, 385.

³⁰ Потебня 1865: 305; Афанасьев 1868: 570; Ђорђевић 1958: 180-182; Гура 1997: 330.

³¹ Ђорђевић 1958: 181-182; Гура 1997: 330.

³² Ђорђевић 1958: 182; Гура, 1997: 330.

³³ Hirc 1896: 10-11.

will appear around her head instead of the wedding wreath³⁴. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, to bewitch a young woman a man catches a snake on the Annuciation Day, chops its head off, cuts the head into halves. At the same time a pumpkin seed is cut into halves. Head halves and seed halves are placed on both sides of the road, so that the woman could walk in between, then the halves are joined respectively, as a result of which she falls in love and loses her head³⁵. Czech beliefs run that if a white snake's head is cut off and a pea is inserted into the right eye, a wonderful pod will grow that should enable one to become invisible, and the one who eats the pod will understand the language of the birds³⁶. In order to succeed in hunting, the hunter should cut a snake's head off, put it in a small box and place the box in an ant hill. The ants eat all the meat till the white bone only is left. On Maundy Thursday, the hunter should take a pea seed and, with the start of the church service, insert it into the snake's right eye. On Maundy Friday he should take another pea seed and insert it into the left eye-pit, as the church service starts. On Holy Saturday the hunter should take the third pea seed and put it into the snake's mouth, at the same moment. After two Sundays pass, he should take the head and bury it in a secure place, where nothing can damage it, and cover the head with stones. Pea tendrils are to sprout. The ones growing out of the eye can intertwine, the one growing out of the mouth must grow separately. When the peas start growing, the hunter should make a wreath from the pea pods. When he goes hunting, he should take the wreath and put it under his hat, and take a pea tendril from the snake's mouth and put it in his mouth. Then the hunter climbs a post or hides in the tree crown, and all the fur and feather gather around him against their will while he is invisible to them³⁷ (). The Czechs also believe that a person who has eaten a pea pod grown from a snake's head, is capable of understanding the language of geese³⁸. In Swabia three peas are planted in the eyes and the mouth of the killed snake and then a ball from the grown peas is rolled, which is claimed to bring luck³⁹. The Hutsuls catch a snake, cut its head off on St. George's Day, put some garlic in the snake's mouth, and plant it in a garden bed. The sprouted garlic is of red color, it serves to protect the one who rubs it into their skin from female forest spirits. The Transcarpathian Ukrainians believe that garlic tops grown from a snake's head and placed under a hat enable one to see witches in the crowd of believers exiting a church. In Pinsk region, dried pea sprouts, grown in a killed snake's mouth, are shredded to produce a drink thus having a debiliating effect⁴⁰.

³⁴ Ђорђевић 1958: 182; Гуря 1997: 330.

³⁵ Ђорђевић 1958: 183.

³⁶ Grohmann 1864: 206-207; Афанасьев 1868: 570; Wuttke, Meyer 1900: 116.

³⁷ Grohmann 1864: 206-207.

³⁸ Hoffmann-Krayer 1935-36: 1153-1154; Ђорђевић 1958: 182; Гуря 1997: 330.

³⁹ Hoffmann-Krayer 1935-36: 1153.

⁴⁰ Гуря 1997: 330.

The presented ethnographic material shows that the peoples of Central and Eastern Europe and particularly the South Slavs of the Balkan region: Bulgarians, Croats and Serbs, - preserved the belief in the magical properties of snakes' heads till the 19th-20th centuries. A snake's head is believed to heal various diseases and ward off evil spirits, to influence human, animal and grain fertility, as well as to bring luck to people having it at them. So, in folk beliefs the same qualities are attributed to both the serpent itself and its head⁴¹. Thus, it is fair to claim that a cut-off snake's head, in the beliefs of the abovementioned European peoples, is the embodiment of the qualities, strength and abilities of a living snake and is understood as a “copy” of the latter. Such conclusions call into question V. I. Balabina's speculation that a "dead snake's head" had any semantics of its own, different from the semantics of a living snake. At the same time our conclusion undoubtedly confirms Balabina's claims concerning the significance of the snake's head motif in the art of ancient European farmers. Fully agreeing with Balabina's opinion that “cosmogony of ancient farmers of Europe ... can only be fragmentary correlation with later traditions”, we hope that further research of the “dead snake's head” motif in the ornamentation of the European Eneolithic ceramics based on the latest ethnographic material and a more thorough analysis of the archaeological context of the findings will shed light on the semantics of this motif in the cosmology of eneolithic farmers.

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⁴¹ Гура 1997: 282-293, 307-352, 355-357; Бер-Глинка 2015: 17-64.

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“THE SNAKE” AND THE AGRARIAN RITUALS

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For some time, we have been concerned with the connection between Heaven and Earth, especially in terms of human attitudes, reflected in daily activities and symbolism¹. One of the themes was the serpent, with a rich symbolism in the Neolithic and the Copper Age². This study will try to find answers to the question "Why did our ancestors use the snake symbol and sign in their nonverbal communication?" When we observe the snake's life and behaviour, we come to understand why Neolithic men used the snake symbol, and why it was important for our ancestors to represent the snake. The snake sign, as revealed by archaeological finds, enables us to deepen the research about these „famous reptiles”.

During the Neolithic, the snake was a symbol for good, helping humankind, but also unknowable and unpredictable, so for the Neolithic men the snake became sacred. That is the reason why they represented the sacred snake on vases, bracelets, buildings, even more, the snake can be found on the sky as a unique constellation charting. It should be noted that the snake motif on the sky is not only displayed as the Serpens constellation, but it is also present in other two constellations: Draco and Hydra. Why does it appear three times on the sky? It is interesting to note that all three constellations are special for something. The Serpens constellation is unique among the constellations in being split into two non-contiguous parts by the constellation of Ophiuchus, the "Serpent-Bearer". This snake on the sky represents the good, wise and healing snake, and is visible 6 months of the year.

The north pole of the ecliptic is near the constellation of Draco (a hundred-headed serpent-like dragon), which is circumpolar and can be seen all year from northern latitudes. Draco has its own fabulous symbolism.

¹ Csillik et alii 2001; Maxim, Csillik 2003: 5-10; 2009: 296; 2010: 45; 2014: 270; Szücs-Csillik et alii 2013; Szücs-Csillik, Maxim 2013: 2/847-855; 2015: 2/605-620; 2015a: 241-258

² Maxim 2005: 53; Csillik, Maxim 2005: 253; Lazarovici Gh., Lazarovici C.-M. 2015: 51

The constellation of Hydra (the water snake) is the largest of the 88 modern constellations, measuring 1303 square degrees. In mythology, the Hydra is represented by a scary creature.

In Romanian tradition the snake has many meanings, the best known is that of the guardian serpent (the snake of the house), which represents the protector of the household goods, or the foreteller of rain. Connections between the snake and the cyclic regeneration of nature appeared not only in Romania. Frequently encountered signs of the snake are the following: the spiral; zigzag; ascending meander; little sticks; chain of S's; the alphabetical character S (snake in attack); the shape of the S letter around the eggs (circles)³.

About the snake

Snakes are elongated, legless, carnivorous *reptiles* of the suborder *Serpentes* that can be distinguished by their lack of eyelids, fixed eyes, external ears, great mouth opening, cool and smooth body. An interesting fact is that snakes can open their mouths in about a 150-degree angle. The reason that snakes can open their mouths so wide is that their jawbone is connected by ligaments, rather than hooking into the skull like other animals.

Living snakes are found on every continent except Antarctica. It is worth mentioning that on the islands formed after volcanic eruptions, snakes were among the first inhabitants⁴. Their evolutionary origins are obscure. In most mythologies the snake is preexistent in the *Primordial Waters*. All four fundamental elements of life are present in snake attributes: Water, Earth, Air and Fire; in other words, it embodies the Unity of the entire Cosmos.

In the Neolithic, when the fertility and fecundity cult developed (rites related to the fields for agricultural cultivation and animal husbandry), the Serpent cult was generalized and it remained one of the most important up until the advent of Christianity. It is not known exactly when the splitting of snake symbolism took place, by which resulted two entities – one good and the other evil. According to some specialists, the split is linked to Christianity. The fact is that the snake is a prehistoric deity that is present in the Romanian folk calendar and is celebrated on Alexis' Day (*Alexie*) and on the Day of the Cross (*Ziua Crucii*)⁵. The oldest snake fossil (*Tetrapodophis amplexus*, cca. 120 million years old) looks almost like a modern snake, except for one glaring difference: It has four feet, each with five digits⁶.

³ Maxim 2005: 53-61; Csillik, Maxim 2005: 253-262; Lazarovici C.-M. 2009: 104; Lazarovici Gh., Lazarovici C.-M. 2015: 85.

⁴ Mulcahy et alii 2014.

⁵ Gimbutas 1989: 121; Ghinoiu 2001: 187; 2004: 103; 2008: 11, 341; Olteanu 2001: 155, 404; Golan 2003: 192; Cojocaru 2008.

⁶ Martill et alii 2015: 416.

Most species are nonvenomous and those that have venom use it primarily to kill and subdue prey rather than for self-defence. Some snakes possess venom potent enough to cause painful injury or death to humans.

The oldest preserved descriptions of snakes can be found in the Brooklyn Medical Papyrus (450 BC). The terms “snake” and “serpent” have the same etymology, based on the verbs *to creep*, *to crawl*. The origin of snakes remains an unresolved issue. There are two main competing hypotheses: there is fossil evidence suggesting that snakes may have evolved from burrowing lizards, such as the varanids. The ancestors of snakes were related to Mosasaurs – extinct aquatic reptiles of the Cretaceous.

As a symbol, the snake represents first of all the *force of life, regeneration and procreation* (a seminal and phallic symbol). The snake has many positive and evil meanings. After Chevalier and Geerbrant⁷ the evil snake is the snake from the depths (underground) but the positive (cosmic, celestial) snake developed into some mythological themes of different civilizations. The snake that swallows its tail symbolizes perpetual movement, the spiral of life, rebirth, regeneration, continuity. Furthermore, the coiled black and white snake (primordial egg) suggests that these might be yin and yang, good and bad, black and white, just as in the case of the two opposing snakes, one from the underground and the other the cosmic (white) one⁸. In Romanian mythology the snake guards the enchanted springs and the white snake guards the treasures⁹.

The snake symbolically represents the *creator of life* on Earth. Because of this, in most mythologies, the snake is considered *sacred*, the symbol of *eternal* life. This sanctity comes from the energy created by the meander-spiral movement, which in philosophy is considered a sign of eternal evolution by the cyclic return. In mythology the snake is considered a *mysterious* being, which existed before the creation of the Earth. As a "non-created" being, it was given *supernatural* powers. The snake as a god can be considered an archetype because, and in cosmogonic myths (*Myths of Creation*) we find it present among the gods of creation and connected to chaos, to the origins¹⁰.

The symbol of the snake can be found on walls of caves or constructions, on objects of bone and stone, pots, vessels, jewellers, cloths, and even on statues that represent gods. On old Neolithic pottery in Europe, the theme of the serpent is most developed around the years 5000 – 3000 BC and then in the Iron Age (Dacians, Etruscans, Greeks, and Romans) when there was an "art of the serpent"¹¹. There is also a Hindu festival called *Nag Panchami* on August 7th each year, on which snakes are worshipped.

⁷ Chevalier, Gheerbrant 1995: 298-313.

⁸ Wirth 1931: 112.

⁹ Vulcănescu 1987.

¹⁰ Eliade 1981: 91.

¹¹ Gimbutas 2007: 221.

A celebration of snakes takes place at Cocullo (near Pescara, Italy), on the first Thursday in May, when the statue of St. Domenic is covered by the snakes caught in March during "*Processione dei Serpari*." In Romanian folk tradition, on March 17 - the Alexis (*Alexie*) day is the Serpent's Day, and September 14 - the Cross Day (*Ziua Crucii*) is considered to mark the withdrawal of snakes to hibernate. In Catholic tradition, March 17th is St Patrick's Day, a saint venerated for bringing the Gospel to Ireland and at the same time "driving out the snakes".

The symbolism of the snake is very *complex*, and so are its representations in the South-eastern European Neo-Eneolithic, ranging from the most realistic to the most abstract. Such symbols are present in the Sesklo, Dimini, Karanovo, Starčevo-Criș, Vinča, LBK, Gumelnița, Lengyel, Cucuteni-Trypolie, Sălcuța cultures, as well as in others¹². Marija Gimbutas has largely commented on the attributes of the snake as a god and its appearance on different categories of objects, the correlation with the spiral, meander, bull, Sun, costumes and others¹³.

In Romanian mythology we find snakes as house guardians. The guardian serpent lives underneath, in the foundation or in the walls of the house. The residents of the house put milk by the threshold for the snake, which will protect the house against evil. The milk is put in special vessels (plates, bowls - Fig. 4a-b, 5c). Often young children play and eat with the snake of the house, considering it their "brother". It is also considered to be the house's clock at night, because it can be heard through the walls.

Due to its life cycle, the snake symbolizes a cord between two unknown worlds, underground and heaven (*axis-mundi*). In Oltenia, the snake is represented as a string twisted on the wooden gates, along with the wolf's tooth and the Sun. The snake and the wolf's tooth are the heritage of archaic native culture. The Dacian *Draco*, the Dacian banner, was a wolf's head with a snake's tail.

¹² Andrieșescu 1924: XXII/7; Bărcăcilă 1924: fig. 246-248; László 1924: V/6; Roska 1941: LXXXIII/7, XCII/10, 12, XCIII/8, CIV/13, CVI/2, CVII/14, CXI/3, 8, CXXVIII/22, CXLIX/5; Kutzián 1944: 34/16; Harțuche, Dragomir 1957: 5/3, 6, 12/1; Mateescu 1957: fig. 7-8; Petrescu-Dîmbovița 1957: 7/17; Petrescu-Dîmbovița et alii 1999: 165/13, 15-16, 166/3, 5, 176/7; Vlassa 1959: 10, fig. 1/1, 9; 1976: 76 (3/9), 130 (10-11), 173 (4/3); Müller-Karpe 1968: II, 191/C2; Karmanski 1968: fig. 20; 1978: VI/1; 1993: IX/1; Marinescu-Bîlcu 1974: 28/1, 55/6; Dumitrescu VI. 1979: fig. 10, 19c, 20b, 21a, 22a, 30, 32a, 35b, 37b, 42-43b, 53, 83, 91, 102, 105, 110-115, 121, 124, 127, 132, 136, 139, 150, 156, 160-161, 176; Todorova 1979: fig. 27, 30, 49b, 57b, 79a; Lazarovici Gh. 1979: VIII/D8, E39-40, XVI/H11, XIX/H14, XXIV/E22-23, 31, 42, G18, H8, 32, XXVI/B8; Micle, Florescu 1980: fig. 29, 70, 73, 76, 162, 177, 186, 192, 401; Kalmar 1987-1988: 3/2; Gimbutas 1989: 121-140; fig. 27, 44, 202/2, 223, 336/1, 452, 460, 469/2; Comșa 1990: 48/4, 49/5, 7; Kalicz, Raczky 1991: fig. 4; Raczky 1991: fig. 131; Paul 1992: XXXVII/1-2, XXXVIII/3; Bojadjev et alii 1993: 6/1, 9/8; Benac 1993: 5/12; Kalicz 1993: 4/9; 1998: 2/9, 4/2, 9/1-2, 5, 10/4, 29/1, 43/6; Séfériades 1993: 1/10, 17/1, 21/10; Todorova, Vaisov 1993: 84/3, 91/2, 97/11, 12, pl. 43; Pavuk 1993: 1/9; Nica 1996: 5/13, 6/10, 13/1, 5; Kazdova 1993: 6/8; Drașovean 1996: LXII/1, LXVIII/6, CIX/7; Drașovean et alii 1996: XLI/1; Hașotti 1997: 31/4-5; Ignat 1998: 64/8; Lenneis et alii 1999: 163-167, fig. 3/2, 4/1, 21/1, 4, 22/2, 28/9; Mantu, Țurcanu 1999: nr. 1, 135, 139, 140, 149, 153, 164, 352/353; Ruttkay 1999; Luca 2001: 40/4; Maxim 2005: 53-61; Csillik, Maxim 2005: 253-262.

¹³ Gimbutas 1989: 121-136.

In Romanian mythology, on 17th March (the Snake Day), the snake will thaw. In these moments, according to tradition, there are a series of prohibitions, such as: not to utter its name, surround the house and garden with ashes and make fire to prevent the snake's entry in household; or to offer the snake a piece of polenta at the root of a tree in order to get rid of worries all summer. Romanian mythology shares with other mythologies the idea of fecundity associated to chthonian beings. On Romanian territory, archaeologists have found many snake symbols¹⁴.

Snakes in Astronomy

The snake appeared in lots of forms on the sky from past to present: as a serpent (Serpens Constellation), a dragon (Draco Constellation), a water snake (Hydra Constellation), a W or M zigzag (Cassiopeia Constellation), and as different spirals, clusters as a part of distinct constellations. The scholar Wirth gathered the multiple aspects of the snake and its connections with the stars, signs and symbols in an elaborated synthesis¹⁵. The Cassiopeia constellation might also be related to the cosmic snake¹⁶.

In the following paragraphs we focus on the Serpens constellation. The Serpens is a constellation in the northern hemisphere and is the only constellation that is divided into two sections: Serpens Caput ("the serpent's head") and Serpens Cauda ("the serpent's tail"). Serpens is the second-largest snake in the sky, the largest being Hydra, the water snake.

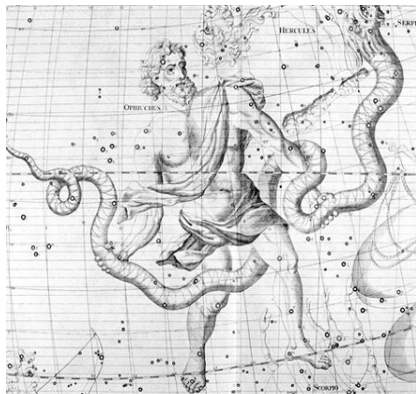


Fig. 1. *Serpens constellation.*

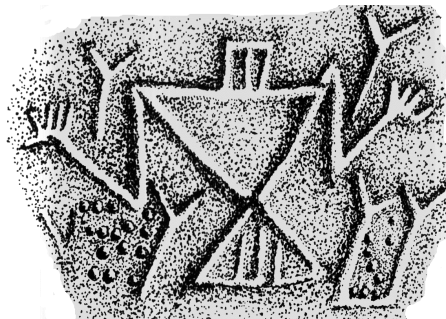


Fig. 2. *Szelevény, Linear Pottery¹⁷; a snake with open mouth.*



The constellation Ophiuchus, the Snake Holder, lies between the two Serpens sections (Fig. 1-2). The Serpens represents a huge snake held by the constellation Ophiuchus. Its Greek name was Ophis, i.e. the serpent of the serpent-holder, presumably to prevent confusion with the other celestial serpents, Draco

¹⁴ Lazarovici Gh., Lazarovici C.-M. 2015.

¹⁵ Wirth 1931.

¹⁶ Makkay 1971; Lazarovici Gh. 2002; Lazarovici Gh., Lazarovici C.-M. 2015.

¹⁷ Gimbutas 1989: fig. 374/1; see also fig. 346 (Retymno); 347 (Knossos); 348 (Crete).

and Hydra. In his left hand Ophiuchus grasps the top half of the snake, while his right hand holds the tail. Aratus and Manilius agreed that Serpens was coiled around the body of Ophiuchus, but most star atlases show the snake simply passing between his legs or behind his body¹⁸.

In Greek mythology, Ophiuchus was identified as the healer Asclepius, son of Apollo, although why he appears to be wrestling with a serpent in the sky is not fully explained. His connection with snakes is attributed to the story that he once killed a snake that was miraculously restored to life by an herb placed on it by another snake. Asclepius subsequently used the same technique to revive dead people. In this context, snakes are the symbol of *rebirth* because they shed their skins every year.

The brightest star in Serpens is the red giant star *Alpha Serpentis* in Serpens Caput, with an apparent magnitude of 2.63, meaning it can easily be seen with the naked eye even in areas with substantial light pollution. The star *Alpha Serpentis* is called *Unukalhai* in Arabic, meaning „the serpent’s neck”, where it is located. The tip of the serpent’s tail is marked by *Theta Serpentis*, called *Alya*, an Arabic word that actually refers to a sheep’s tail. *Beta*, *Gamma*, and *Iota Serpentis* form a distinctive triangular shape marking the head of the snake. The brightest star in the tail, *Eta Serpentis*, is similar to Alpha Serpentis' primary in that it is a red giant. The most famous object in Serpens is a star cluster called *M16*, embedded in a gas cloud called the *Eagle Nebula*, which takes its name from its supposed resemblance to a large bird of prey. The nebula measures 70 light-years by 50 light-years and contains the *Pillars of Creation*, three dust clouds. Other striking objects include the *Red Square Nebula*, one of the few objects in astronomy to take on a square shape. *Messier 5* is a globular cluster positioned near *Alpha Serpentis*. This cluster is visible to the naked eye in good weather.

Babylonian astronomy names two "serpent" constellations, *Mušḫuššu* and *Bašmu*. It appears that *Mušḫuššu* was depicted as a hybrid of a dragon, a lion and a bird (corresponding to the Hydra constellation). *Bašmu* was a horned serpent (corresponding to the Serpens constellation)¹⁹.

Part of the Milky Way's galactic plane passes through Serpens Cauda, which is therefore rich in galactic deep-sky objects. Notable extragalactic objects include *Seyfert's Sextet*, one of the densest galaxy clusters known and *Hoag's Object*, the most famous of the very rare class of galaxies known as ring galaxies. There are two meteor showers that radiate from Serpens, *the Omega Serpentids* and *the Sigma Serpentids* (the showers peak between December 18 and December 25)²⁰.

¹⁸ Ridpath 1988.

¹⁹ White 2007: 180.

The snake and the Agrarian Calendar in Romanian folk tradition

The Romanian folk calendar (comprising the agricultural, pastoral, piscicultural, apiarian and viticultural calendars) includes time counting with lucrative value and it is based on the observations of the celestial phenomena and the biorhythms of plants, animals and birds. The Romanian people marked the events of nature and life; they dressed up for celebration according to celestial, agrarian and pastoral seasons. Therefore, there is a Snake Day, Mouse Day, Fish Day, Cuckoo Day, a Bear Day, the Old Dokia (*Baba Dochia*) Days, the Santa Days, the borrowed Days, the Cross Day (day of the Serpent, *Cârstovul Viilor*, Earth)²¹. Most calendars begin around the spring equinox. The coming of spring is the symbol of rebirth, life, hope, and blessing. This period is marked by ritual events, by the magical ancient purifying, rebalancing, reenergizing rules, and by the body, soul and space harmonization as a reflection of what is happening in the sky and in nature²². The snake from sky and from earth has an important role in marking the lucrative cycle of six months (spring - autumn). The snake is an archetypal symbol with an essential role in ancient ritual practices; it is believed to be a prehistoric deity (Neolithic), which was adopted by Romanian Christianity, receiving a holy name. The snake in Romanian spirituality has a deeper, totemic sense related to fertility, fecundity, and eternal return to life, as demonstrated by representations on prehistoric archaeological objects and those produced by folk art.

²⁰ Hermann 1994.

²¹ Ghinoiu 2008: 338-343.

²² Pistolea: www.agoracreștina.ro

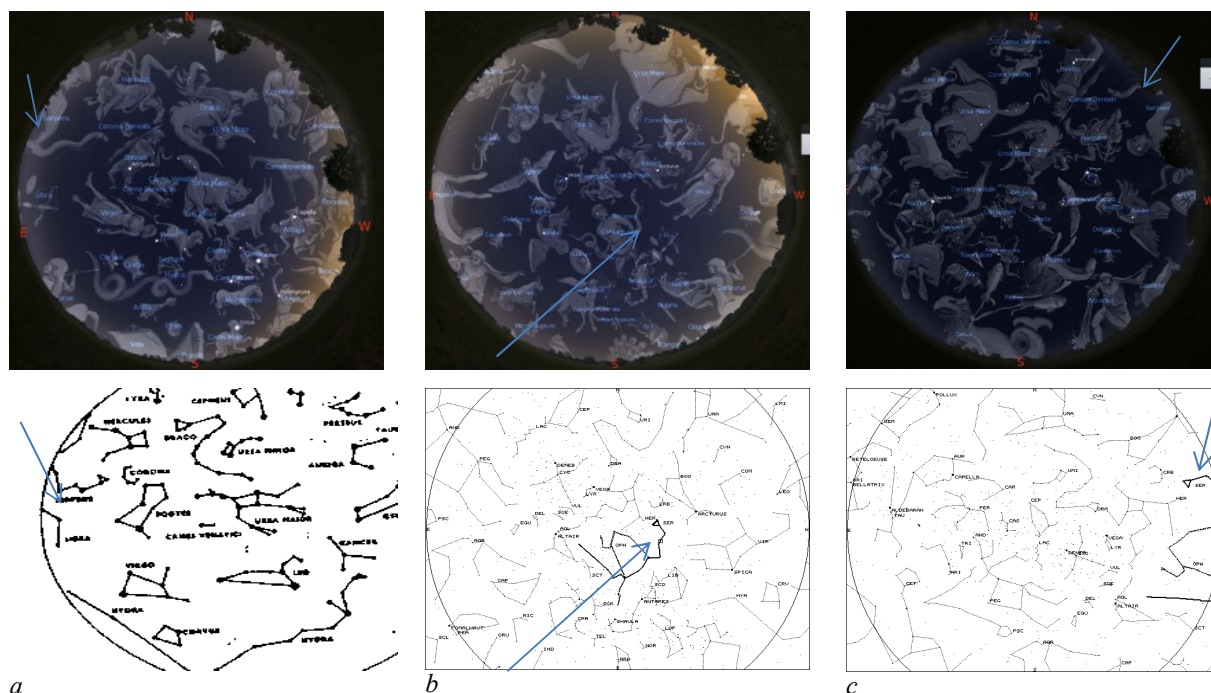


Fig. 3. The *Serpens* constellation: a – beginning of agrarian year (spring equinox), ground opening; b – on the Sânzâiene Day (summer solstice); c – the Day of the Cross (autumn equinox), ground closing. The celestial map between 5000-4000 BC at mean Romanian latitude.

The serpent's power is revealed in Romanian folklore, beliefs, customs, tales and myths, influencing destiny and life. Holidays dedicated to the serpent in the folk calendar are: *Măcinici* (March 9); *Alexii* (March 17); *Blagoveștenia* (March 25); *Soborul Blagoveșteniilor* (March 29); *Sângeorz* (April 23) – with sacred rituals to stimulate regeneration energy; *Probejenie* (*Schimbarea la față*, August 6) and *Great St. Mary* (August 14) – eggs hatching, molting; *Little St. Mary* (September 8) and the *Day of the Cross* (September 14)²³.

The *Serpens*' appearance on the sky at the end of February/beginning of March is correlated with the agrarian calendar, and with the snake's life circle on earth.

In March, when the earth gets warmer, snakes come out of hiding, slightly numb, and then they start looking for food in preparation for mating. These points coincide with the appearance of the *Serpens* constellation in the sky. In agriculture, the snake has a positive appearance: it marks the start of agricultural work in the fields and vineyards, the beginning of the fishing year, the beginning of the apiarian year; the preparation of the flocks for mountain shepherding and natural-herb collecting. It is also a messenger of the gods. In February and early March agricultural tools are prepared, so that after *Alexii* farmers can plow and sow, since it was prohibited to plow before that date, in order not to harm the

²³ Evseev 1999: 448; Bocșe 2006, I-II: 209-210; Cojocaru 2008: 59, 300, 484-518.

creatures that hibernate (snakes included), until after the "opening of the ground". Similarly, after the Cross Day, autumn plowing is not carried out because "the ground is closed".

The cycle of seasons starts with the spring equinox. On the Sky as well as on the Earth, the *Serpens* constellation has the same behaviour as the snake's life cycle: at the beginning of spring, it appears on the European sky. At its climax (in June) the reptile lays its eggs. In the fall, the constellation disappears from the European sky. This cosmic and terrestrial cycle has been observed since the dawn of time and it has been used as an agricultural clock. The appearance of the snake on the Sky and on the Earth means the beginning of the Agricultural Year, and of certain fertility, fecundity and healing rituals, both for the family and for the community. For this reason, the farmers of the Neolithic and the Eneolithic paid great attention to this remarkable "divinity".

Our investigation observes a correlation during the year (from March to February) between three areas: the life of the snake (biology), the *Alpha Serpentis* position on the sky (astronomy) and the agrarian calendar (ethno- archaeology).

The *Serpens Caput* constellation (more exactly the star *Unukalhai*) begins to appear on the night sky after sunset at the end of February in the Neolithic.

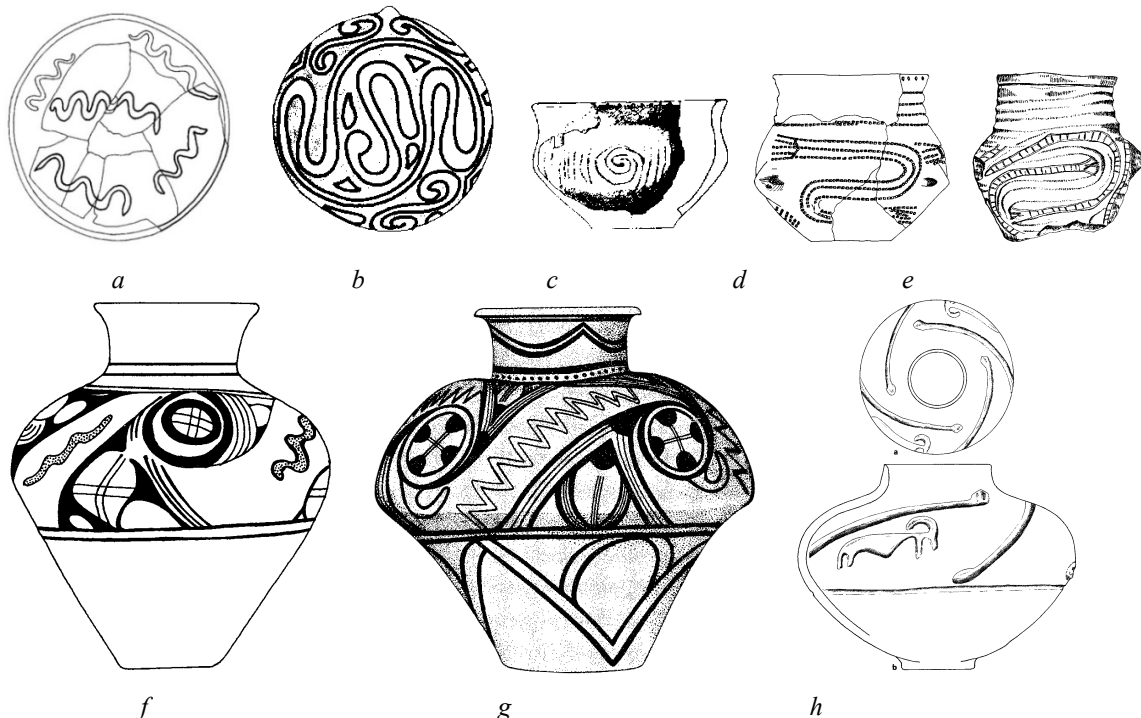


Fig. 4. a, f – Valea Lupului; b – Hăbășești; c – Hodoni; d - Târpești; e - Traian; g - Trușești; h – Teiu.

The snake emerges from hibernation in March, or when the average daytime temperatures reach and remain about 10 degrees Celsius or higher. This means that the snakes may be active most of the day during the spring. While the males of some species travel great distances to seek out females, others live in such high populations that the males need not travel far to find females. The males of some species engage in physical altercations over females. In other species, males do not fight with one another and may form "breeding balls," in which several males vie to fertilize a single receptive female.

Traditional, non-agrarian work in Romania used to start on 9th March (*Măcinici*), close to the spring equinox. In early March, people beat the ground in order to get out the snakes and become able to start the agricultural work, the plowing and the sowing. On the evening sky rose the *Alpha Serpentis* and a part of the *Serpens Caput* constellation. The appearance of these stars coincides with the end of the snakes' hibernation (snakes come out from the ground) and the beginning of the agricultural year.

The Snake Day falls on the day of *Alexie – the patron of creatures – Santa Alexie – Alexie Boje – Alexie Caldu – St. Alexa – St. Serpent – Feritorul de Cumpene* (March 17th in the current calendar), when *Fish Day* is celebrated (the beginning of the fishing year) and also *Retezatul Stupilor* (the beginning of the apiarian year)²⁴.

On this occasion ritual with apotropaic purposes take place, for purification; solar energies are triggered by stimulating beneficial warmth that awakens everything to life. Magical practices are aimed at purification (cleaning) of houses, outhouses, yards, fields, gardens, orchards, animals and humans, by collecting and burning brushwood ("a magic circle of fire and smoke") and by smoking (fumigating) the house, courtyard, annexes, garden and orchards. Animals are driven over embers and clamped chains in order to close the mouth of the serpent. People light up bonfires on borders and at crossroads. Then follows a ritual "game" of purification and initiation of children and youth: dancing, jumping over bonfires, and bypassing the household with ashes from the fireplace. People beat the ground with bludgeons and with their feet; they make much noise to announce the end of purification, so that the Earth can open to expel warmth and creatures. This sacred, magic act is deepened by some prohibitions: do not pronounce the word "snake", the snake is called "lord", "belt" or "one who creeps".

On this day begin the harvesting of medicinal plants and honey, what bees leave unused. These harvestings are used to prepare remedies. It is said that what the snake caught in March is good medicine (see also *Pharmaceutical preparations until the modern era*). During this time, women who deal with

²⁴ Bocșe 2006, I: 207; Ghinoiu 2008: 297.

incantations and spells, may catch or lay hold of a snake that gives them healing powers. Whoever catches a snake will be healthy all year and will slow down his aging process²⁵.

Between the Neolithic and the Copper Age archaeological pieces recording the connection between the serpent and healing (represented by diamonds) are few, as at *Turdaş*; *Bordjoş*, *Novi Bečej*; *Falkenstein*; *Wetzleinsdorf*; *Kleinmeiseldorf*; *Hacilar I*; *Vršac Potporanj*²⁶.

Next on the calendar are the celebrations in April and May, which are under the Egg sign. The egg is an archetype of genesis, a generator of life, symbol of creation, the fertility of the Sun on whom life on Earth depends. The egg is a symbol of the revival of nature and a substitute of the primordial divinity which, when slaughtered by breaking and eating, becomes sacramental for energizing and balancing the senses, soul and body. Apart from the Easter celebration, the panned egg is offered as a gift on *Sângeorz Day* and *Sâmbra Oilor Day*.

The connection between the egg and the snake is evident by the signs – such as the painted egg symbol that represents the snake. Also, the connection is made in archaeological discoveries of representations of snakes sheltering egg dishes (Fig. 5a-b) and in historical information²⁷.

In May and June, about two to four months after ovulation, the eggs are ready for deposition. The female snake lays eggs and builds them in the shape of a pyramid. During this period the female does not eat and is weakened. People do not disturb the coiled female snake. At the same time, the Serpent constellation rises higher on the evening sky. This time coincides with the summer solstice and a series of customs related to crop protection.

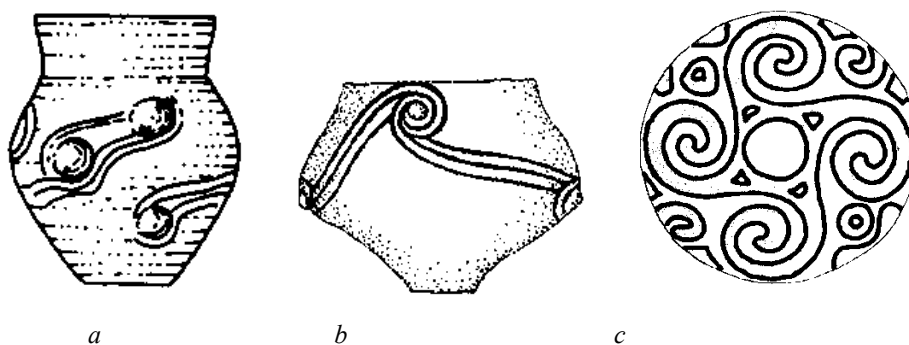


Fig. 5. a – Moravia; b – Zengövárkony; c - Hăbăşeşti.

During the early mornings and late afternoons throughout the summer, during the hottest part of summer, snakes are seldom observed, except occasionally at night. After the summer solstice, in July and August, the agrarian works done are maintaining and protecting the crops (customs and celebrations

²⁵ Olteanu 2001: 125.

²⁶ Bădocan, Maxim 2016: fig. 19-25.

include bringing offerings of the fields, in order to ensure wealth for the future crops). The baby snakes hatch and after a few days, the mother leaves the nest and the young snakes spread out. The Serpent constellation appears at the zenith, above the head.

Snake activity picks up again as temperatures begin to fall in late summer and early autumn, before they go into hibernation, feeding well. The agrarian calendar attends to the harvesting. On the night sky, the Serpent constellation will be seen less.

In September, after the Autumn Equinox, begins a period of cool weather which lasts until in February (mean latitude of Romania, 46° N). Snakes being poikilothermic reptiles, they depend on the ambient temperature to regulate their own internal heat. Therefore, the snake goes into hibernation underground during winter (which starts in September-October) in Romania. If male snakes didn't cool down at some point during the year, they most likely would not be able to produce fertile sperm.

During this period, the serpent constellation disappears from the sky and we can't see the star Unukalhai, nor the Serpent constellation on the night sky. Now, the Earth enters the second stage of the agricultural calendar, when people gather and store the fruits of the field, they stop collecting medicinal plants, they quit ploughing (to protect the creatures that were hidden in the ground), they prepare the animals, the beehives for wintering, and start indoor housework (weaving, sewing, repair tools, eventually cutting and trimming winter trees etc.).

In the Romanian tradition, the largest celebration of autumn is the Cross Day (September 14th) near the autumnal equinox. On this day elderly people tell the "times" according to the birds' behavior (chirping, migration), mice and plants (wormwood). These predictions are based on "signs" of heaven (the position of the constellations) and nature, which are considered "messages" from the divinity for the protection of men. Now the last herbs with apotropaic character (basil, garlic) are picked, considered to be sacred and magical plants.

People cut hazelnut bush branches (a shrub with fantastic powers) that will be used for "ritual beating" in ritualistic practices (New Year, Alexis, Călușari) and twigs to be used to search for water sources. It is said that snakes gather to make "expensive stone" in hazelnut wood²⁸.

Among taboos observed, we mention the prohibition of killing snakes. The snake that has bitten a man cannot enter the ground on the Day of the Cross, because it is not accepted by Earth. All these are part of the communication system between men, nature and heaven, and it is materialized by gestures, words, actions, places and practices of mysterious ritual and magic²⁹.

²⁷ Ghinoiu 2004: 189.

²⁸ Ghinoiu 2004: 105-106; Olteanu 2001: 405.

²⁹ Bocșe 2006, III: 105-110.

After our correlation we can see the harmonic resonance between life and the sky's cycles. When the snake is seen on the sky, then we can observe it on the ground, and the agrarian works are in progress.

Conclusion

We present the results of a study of the snake *symbol*, its *meaning* in rituals and representations. In most mythologies the snake is considered *sacred*, with *supernatural powers*. The meander-spiral movement of the snake is considered a *sign of eternal evolution*. The snake's life circle is *dual*, half a year under the Earth, and half a year at ground level. As a constellation, *Serpens* is unique among the constellations, being split into two non-contiguous parts.

The appearance of *Serpens* on the sky correlates with the *agrarian calendar* and with the snake's life circle. We analysed this correlation and we concluded that the snake had a very important place in the Neolithic agrarian calendar: at spring ploughing (Agrarian Beginning) the *Serpens* appears at the east in the night sky and the snakes come out from the ground. Alternatively, at autumn ploughing (Agrarian end) the snakes move back in the ground and the *Serpens* disappears from the night sky, to the west.

To create a New World, the old (Chaos) must be destroyed. This action is materialized through ritual death and descent into hell, followed by revival of the cosmic order³⁰. Cosmic order is continually disturbed by the Great Serpent (Snake Goddess, Snake Divinity), first as a threat to reduce the world to chaos (by people's defects), which demands atonement and purification by various rituals (Summer), leading to a regeneration processes and recreation at the New Year celebrations (in Sumerian-ki-til means "the force that makes the world live again")³¹.

The world is a mixture of the two forces: the primacy of the chaotic, or demonic versus creativity, the presence of divine wisdom. The snake symbol is very complex³². This study of the *Serpens* constellation shows the significance of the snake symbol in the life of ancient people. We conclude that the snake was a natural warning signal during the Neolithic.

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³⁰ Eliade 1994: 69.

³¹ Eliade 1994: 62-63.

³² Lazarovici Gh., Lazarovici C.-M. 2015.

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ABOUT SYMBOLS AND SIGNS ON ROCK SANCTUARIES

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Abstract: *We present some of the discoveries from a few sites in the Munții Buzăului mountains. The analysis of the signs and symbols indicates the presence of outdoor sanctuaries. Some of them can relate to prehistory. Investigations up to now prove the presence in the area of certain discoveries linked to the Dacian era.*

Definitions. Of the numerous aspects that characterise the term „sanctuary”, we focus on holy place, altar, a place of secrets at Philon. The etymology of the term *sanctuary* is related to the term for sky, *nemos*¹. In the case of outdoor sanctuaries², these can be caves, abris, mountain tops, and only later buildings. In a cultic place, the altar defines the divinity. Rituals, initiations, the occasional bringing of sacrifices and others such actions are in connection to that divinity. In contrast, the rock sanctuary is a sacred place and area where rituals, initiations and other manifestations which leave (or don't leave) archeological traces take place.

Some of these areas are sanctuaries, others remain only sacred areas.

Sacred areas. On the territory of our country we find numerous sacred areas. Among the best known, we mention Sarmizegetusa Regia, with its temples, altars and sanctuaries. For the early Middle

¹ Chevalier, Gheerbrant 1995, 188-189, sanctuary; terms by which it is defined in various religions: *nemeton*, *nemeth*, *lucus*.

² Leuven 1981, 14; Lazarovici Gh. et alii 2001, I.1, 268 ff., 294; Chapmann 1981, 74-75; Lazarovici C.-M., Lazarovici Gh. 2006, 268; 2007; Lazarovici C.-M. 2010; Lazarovici C.-M., Lazarovici Gh. 2011; Lazarovici Gh. et alii 2011; Lazarovici Gh. et alii 2014; 2015; Mateș 2010; Kovács A. 2016.

Ages and relating to early Christianity, we mention the churches at Basarabi and the church complex in the Aluniș-Nucu area, as well as others as shown in fig. 1.

The Aluniș-Nucu area. In this area there are numerous other sacred places with rock art, some of them dating from prehistory.

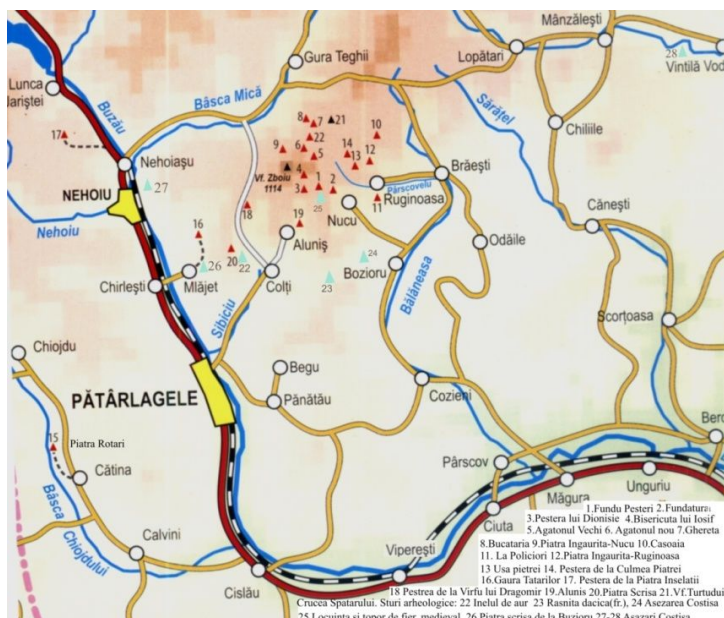


Fig. 1. The area Colți – Aluniș- Nucu-Buzioru-Ruginoasa Gura Teghii-Mlăjet in the Buzău mountains.

relating to our theme, symbols and signs. Simply enumerating them would be too much for one study, so we will only mention them in passing.

Nucu – Fundu Peșterii

The ladders

The small grotto in Nucu Village from Poiana Cozanei, in the shape of a vulva, often mentioned in archeological literature but not only there⁴, has been carefully researched and published in an appreciated study⁵.

From the plan elaborated by our colleagues (fig. 2) for the drawings with catalogue numbers 62,76,73 (cat. numbers henceforth), we present a series of analogies with the *Danube Script* (DS). The

³ *** Nucu - Fundu Peșterii 2012.

⁴ Mândricel, Bortaș 2008, 82-96; Gavrilă 2012, 63-66; Nica D. 2012, 221-229.

⁵ *** Nucu - Fundu Peșterii 2012: see here also the analysis regarding varying opinions and regarding the authors.

earliest are from the time of the Turdaş culture⁶ and are present in various versions on the Colţi- *Culmea Broscarului* megalith as rock art signs⁷.

For sign DS 148a there are analogies at Zorlenţu Mare (Vinča B) on the head of an idol⁸, but also on some tablets from Uruk III⁹.

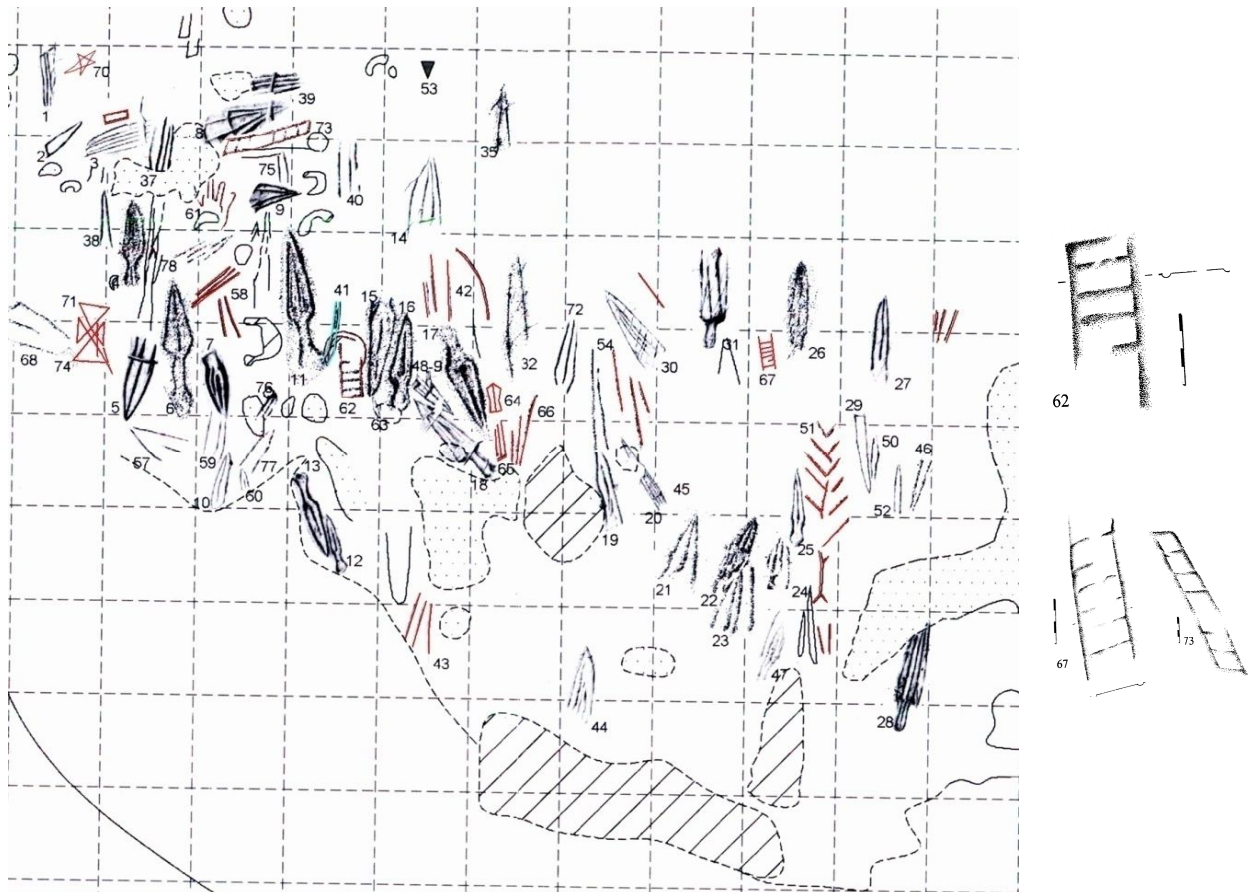


Fig. 2a. The drawing plan from Fundu Peşterii (according to *** Nucă – Fundu Peşterii 2012).

For sign DS 150o there are analogies on mount Teasc, where we noted an outdoor sanctuary¹⁰.

⁶ DS 146, DS 147: Roska 1941, pl. 127/6, 135/33.

⁷ Our adaptation after the images published by Mândricel, Bortaş 2008, 183-184.

⁸ Lazarovici Gh., Lazarovici C.-M. 2014, fig. 77.

⁹ *** Turm zu Babel 2003, IIIN, 3.1.2.3b.

¹⁰ Lazarovici Gh. et alii 2010.1, fig. 42, 52, stones 23 and 32.

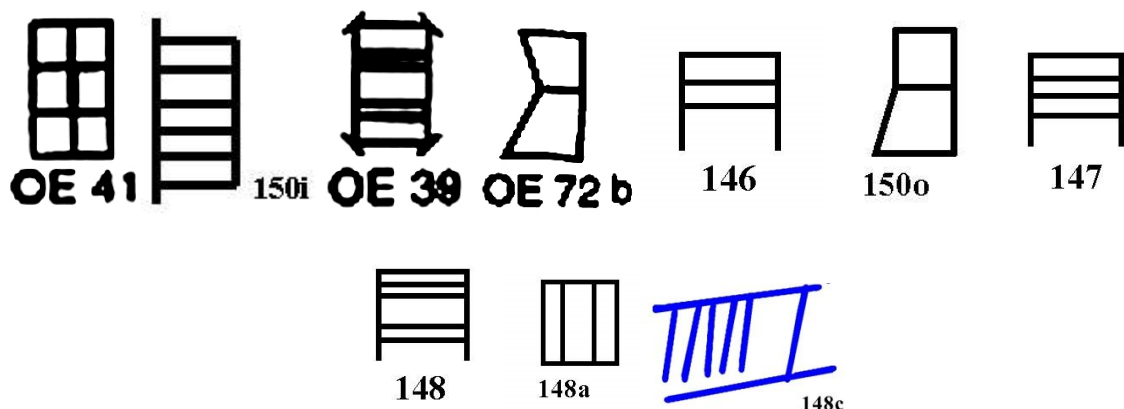
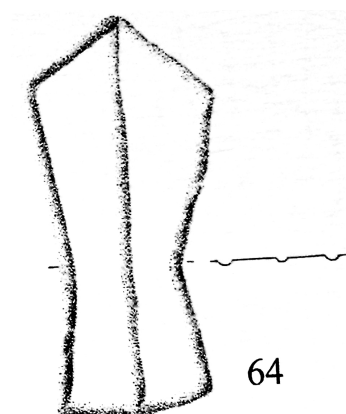


Fig. 2b. Analogies from the DS for the signs in fig. 2a: OE Old European – Haarmann, others according to Lazarovici Gh. et alii 2011; Merlini DS.



The shield from Fundu Peșterii, cat. 64

On the same plane, fig. 2.64, appears the image of a shield. Since it is a little asymmetrical, it is likely that it was worn on a specific arm. However, if we analyze it from other points of view, this asymmetry reminds us of

Fig. 2c. The NFP 64 shield and some analogies from the DS, but also from constellations.

certain DS signs 150o (fig. 2C), but also of the image of constellations, perhaps of Orion.

The bow and arrow¹¹

The bow and arrow are frequently rendered in rock art, and we analyzed some of these instances elsewhere in this volume¹².

¹¹ Sirbu, Soroceanu 2012, 24-36, 330 ff., 527, pl. XXV.l.

¹² Lazarovici Gh., Pop in this volume, fig. 24-26, 32, 36.5, 37 etc.

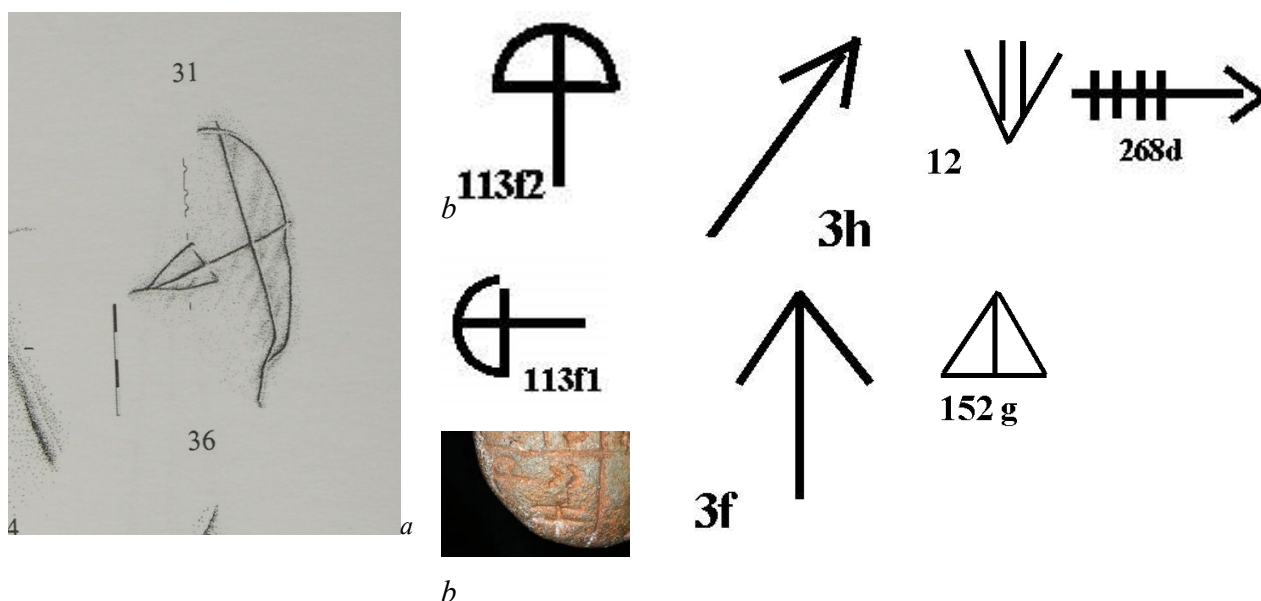


Fig. 3. Nucu-Fundu Peșterii and analogies with signs and symbols.



Fig. 4. Lozna, fragment of Cucuteni jar with signs and symbols.

The shapes in which the bow appears are different, depending on the narratives they refer to, which relate especially to hunting but also to war between various communities¹³.

We can't ignore the signs on a Cucuteni-culture jar from Lozna, especially the significance of the bow and the arrow being drawn with it: to use these to send messages to the gods¹⁴. This is pertinent also because we gave the same interpretation to the Tărtăria bow¹⁵.

Painted, the DS 3h sign appears at Coronini¹⁶, on the Cotârğași megalith¹⁷ and at Teasc¹⁸.

¹³ Müller-Karpe 1968, II, Taf. 264C, Gasulla Gorge, cat. 466 A.

¹⁴ Teodor S., Lazarovici Gh. 2006, 1-2, 3.10 sign h9 masculine type for the bow and the arrow fig. 1-2, 3.14.

¹⁵ We must note that the position is also important.

¹⁶ Boroneanț 1977, fig. 10.10; Lazarovici Gh., Lazarovici C.-M. 2011, Chindia 2, fig. 10/10.

¹⁷ Teodor D. 2003, fig. 5, nr. 50B B.

¹⁸ Lazarovici Gh. et alii 2014, 45, fig. 25, Stone 9.

Such signs also appear on the stones from Teasc mountain¹⁹, where there is also an outdoor sanctuary. The tip of the arrow from NFP 36 has analogies in DS 152g. Often times, this sign suggests the masculine symbol, as is also true of the arrow in general. The sign appears on the Someş cliffs alongside the spear and arrow, marking the vital parts of the stag, on the altar of the Sun Stag²⁰. Since in practice, when the bow is being bent to shoot the arrow the twine has a different angle, not semicircle (as it is pictured here), we deduce that this is a virtual bow rather than a real one.

The star and the pentagram (NFP cod. 70)

The pentagram is an asymmetrical form of the 5-cornered star, traced in one continuous line which starts at the upper right and ends approximately in the same place²¹. It relates also to the idea of number 5, a sacred number, connected to the Hand and its images. Both themes are old and are present in deep prehistory. Naturally, we don't know all the meanings which they received over time, nor their exact dating nor their associations.



Fig. 5. Prehistoric codes and signs: a-b, cod. IIE7, cat. 70 (according to *** Nucu Fundu Peşterii 2011); c, catalogues of prehistoric signs.

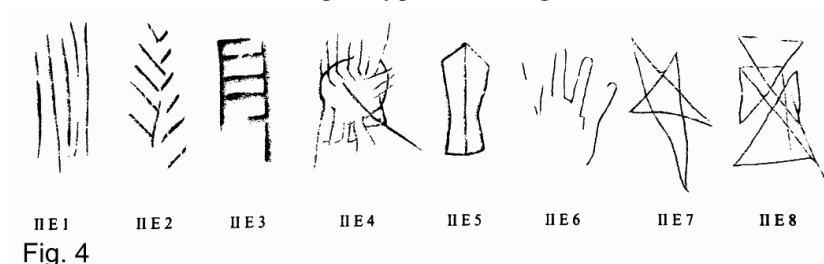


Fig. 4

Nucu - Fundu Peşterii. IIE 1 (S 30); IIE 2 (N 51); IIE 3 (N 62); IIE 4 (N 56)
IIE 5 (N 64); IIE 6 (N 61); IIE 7 (N 70); IIE 8 (N71).

¹⁹ Kovács I. 1914, stone IX; Lazarovici Gh. et alii 2014, fig. 26, *Teasc*, Stone 9; Kovács I. 1914, stone III, Lazarovici Gh. et alii 2014, Stone 3, fig. 15.31.

²⁰ Lazarovici Gh., Pop in this volume, fig. 14b-c, 17 etc.

²¹ *** Nucu – Fundu Pesterii 2012, 281, cat. 70.

The colleagues who published them grouped them, randomly or purposefully, in a table in

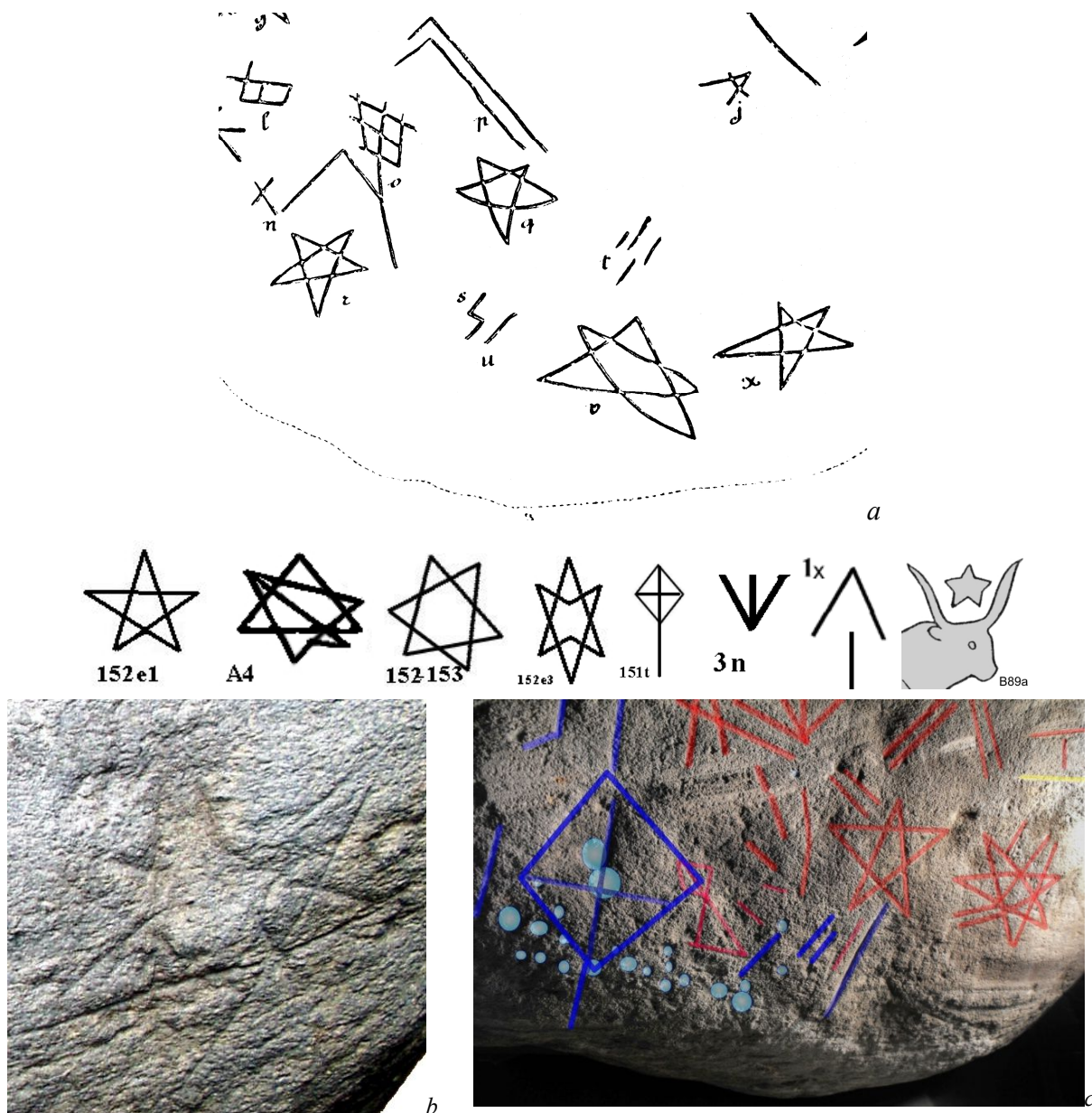


Fig. 6: a, drawings after Kovács Șt. 1911; b, signs, symbols DS; c-d, photo and analysis by Lazarovici Gh. which – with the exception of fig. IIE1 – they all relate to number 5 or its derivations: IIE2 – tree with five branches, or groups of 5; IIE3 – the ladder or the house plan with a group of 5 rooms; IIE4 - „head with feathers”, also groups of 5; IIE5 – the shield derived from a five-sided figure; IIE6 – the right palm with 5 fingers; IIE7 – the star-pentagram with 5 triangles, a 5-sided polygon at the center; and an image shapped like a „pattée” cross, with a group of 9 triangles and 3 rhombuses.

Upon a careful analysis of the pentagrams on stone 5, with detailed photography (fig. 5b-c the colors mark other periods or engraving techniques), we note that they appear even more complicated than in the drawings of Șt. Kovács (fig. 5a)²².

In our DS codes, 151el connects to the idea of number 5, the sacred number, as well as the images of the hand. Both themes are old, prehistoric. According to DEX online, the pentagram is defined as *a five-cornered star, a mystical sign in the Ancient Orient, expressing the coming together of unequal things. It was the emblem of the Pythagoreans and in medieval superstition, the sign was believed to possess healing powers*. It is not our purpose here and now to analyze these aspects of its symbolism, but other colleagues do discuss elsewhere in this volume various points of view concerning philosophical and literary aspects²³.

Naturally, there are variants of the pentagram, such as the 7-cornered sign on Stone 5 on Teasc mountain, although in Șt. Kovács' drawings, the sign is simplified²⁴; Even so, new photographs must be taken at mount Teasc, as well as new analyses, because other images also overlap (see fig. 5b-c)²⁵.

Not all the meanings of the variants of the pentagram are known and have passed on through the ages. When they appear as signs or symbols, their interpretation depends on the context. We don't know their date and associations. As we mentioned above, the colleagues who published these signs grouped them, randomly or purposefully.

²² Kovács Șt. 1914, Fig. 13, markings k r q v x.

²³ Information kindly given by professor Poruciuc, see the study in this volume ; Lazarovici C.-M., Lazarovici Gh., in this volume see the skull and the star, cod. B89a.

²⁴ Kovács I. 1914, *stone V* ; Lazarovici Gh. et alii 2014, fig. 15.b7.

²⁵ Lazarovici Gh. et alii 2014.

The hand – the palm (IIE6 Northern wall, catalogue 61²⁶)

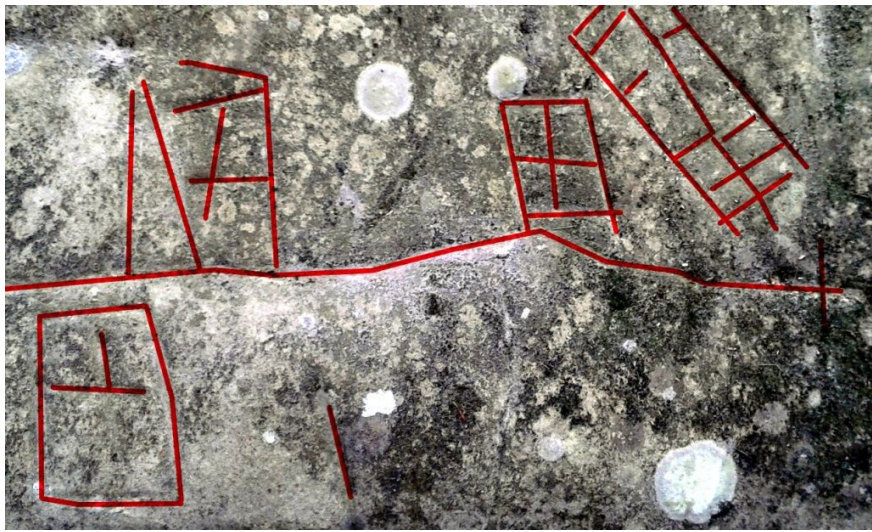
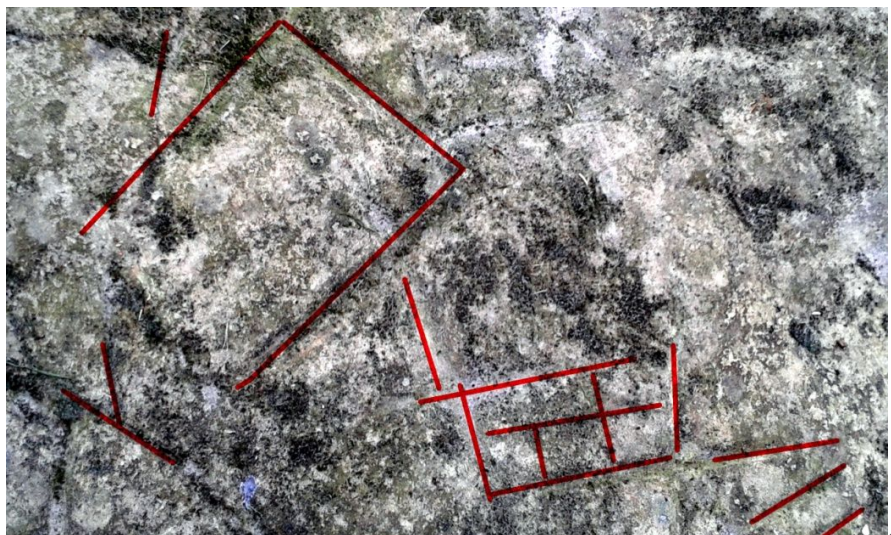


Fig. 7. The megalith at Colți - Culmea Broscarului, our markings in red (photo Lazarovici Gh. 2016).



The meaning of the hand is very complex in its symbolism in most all world philosophies. Beyond the number 5 and its meaning in numerology, starting with the fact that it is a union between even and odd numbers (2+3), 5 is in the middle of the first 9 numbers, symbolizing the perfect man with arms in the praying position and the legs apart (chest – including the heart, head, arms, legs, the 5 extremities). He is the pentagonal harmony of Pythagoreans and holds many other

meanings²⁷.

The image of the palm appears as a symbol in parietal art²⁸. We find it on the Çatal Höyük sanctuaries²⁹, and in the Neolithic it appears on food storage jars, but also on the womb – as a means to

²⁶ *** Nucu – Fundu Peșterii 2012, 28179, cat. 61.

²⁷ Chevalier, Gheerbrant 1995, 310 sqq. and the meaning of the number 5.

²⁸ Anati 1970, 199; L Art des cavernes 1984: woman, goats-sheep, the palm.

²⁹ *Human anatomy and the palm*: Mellaart 1962, pl. XI,b, sanctuary E, level VI,2 Sanctuary E level VI.8 A-2; 1963, pl. IXa, wall, E, sanctuary, E,VI,14; pl. XII, a, wall, E, phase 2, sanctuary, E,VI,8: wall, E, phase, sanctuary, E,VI,8; Gimbutas 1991, fig. 486, level VII.8 central etc.

protect germination or pregnancy³⁰. Occasionally it appears rendered on jugs as a praying person, and in many other forms³¹.

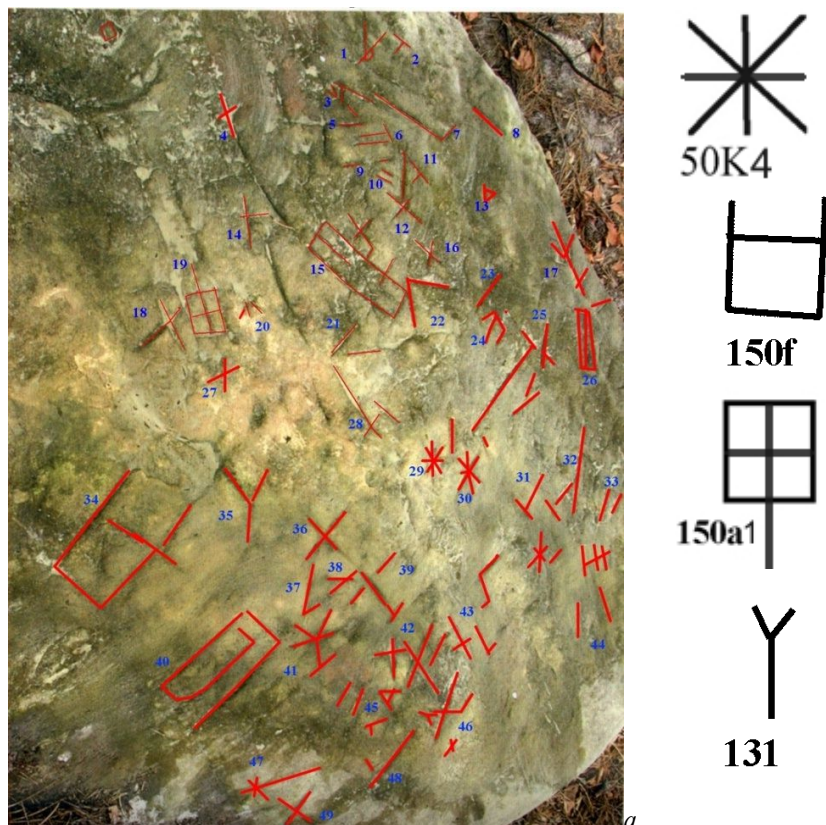


Fig. 8 . „Heart of leaves” Culmea Broscarului: a, Stone 1; b, Stone 2 from Culmea Broscarului 1; DS symbols and signs (50K, 150f, 150a1, 131).



³⁰ Gimbutas 1997, 44; Mateş 2010, chapter 3.

³¹ *Izvoare*: Vulpe R. 1957, 218, fig. 217.3; *Târpeşti*, Sorokin 2001, 84, fig. 1/9, 18; Wirth 1933.

Ariel Golan records a broad debate regarding the hands of the gods in various forms and at different times, as associated with numerous signs and symbols³².

Colți - Culmea Broscarului – the Stones with Signs

Following a recent expedition with Diana-Liana Gavrilă, we photographed again and processed the images of the stone at Colți - *Culmea Broscarului* (details fig. 2c). We concluded that there are some differences from the images presented by I. Mândricel and V. Bortaș (2008, 183-184), according to whom we published certain references. In this case also new photographs are needed, in varying lights and seasons, as well as the compilation of a catalogue. The idea of the first study was that this stone represents a „map” of the mountain, with the various paths leading to Chilii. However, the stone presents signs made with different incision techniques. For more accuracy, the stones must be cleaned of moss before taking pictures.

We hold on to the hypothesis that this megalith could be a map of the area, especially since the peak where it is situated starts off in Pătârlagele, on the right shore of the Sibiciu Valley (fig. 1) and climbs up almost to the mountain top. Some issues rise, however: when was it drawn and which of the signs are contemporaneous to it? On the megalith in question we find some of the signs that also appear at Fundu Peșterii (we refer to parallelograms, such as the ladder), but there are also other shapes and signs. We analyzed some of the signs elsewhere³³.

On the other side, we must note that the ladder at the Grotto of Dionisie Torcătorul is very similar in shape and position to the Nucu – *Fundu Peșterii* code, NFP for short, 62, 67, 73 in fig. 2, which reappears on the megalith as a house plan (fig. 2d, cat. 15). Several rectangular construction plans appear on the Colți - *Culmea Broscarului* 1 megalith (fig. 2c-d). These are lined up in a row, which makes us believe that they could represent a layout plan of the cells on the ridge footpath. Questions arise, such as when these signs were made, if they relate to the cells or are older; the cells are notably dug in several stages, perhaps even across different ages, we wonder if they are all Christian cells or if they are older. In some cells we note different techniques for chiselling and smoothing the walls, done by different tools. Answers to these questions must be sought. For some we have hypotheses, others remain unanswered. Construction plan squares (if that is what they are?!) with an open porch also appear as signs and symbols on archeological artifacts or in rock art, suggesting the quarter-year of the season³⁴, DS code 150f. On

³² Golan 2003, 361, fig. 432-435.

³³ Lazarovici Gh. et alii 2014, passim.

³⁴ For fig. 2d.cat. 34 the DS code is 150f, with analogies at mount Teasc on several Stones: 23, 32, 43, Lazarovici Gh. et alii 2014, fig. 52; *Konogsaue*: Gimbutas 1991, fig. 2/30.9.

idols, on the womb area, the sign suggests „the house” of gestation³⁵. In the Cucuteni culture the same role is played by the rhombus.

On the second stone from *Culmea Broscarului* 1 there are several signs, four of which are obvious, others need a special light or photography at various times during the day (fig. 2e). They also seem to indicate a map: two lines suggest the ridge going down towards the SE (marking 1), where there are other blocks with signs; a hexagon and a pentagram (marking 2) seem to be drawn with points; sign 3 is a hexagram, and a cross (marking 6) could mark the small church of Călugărițele village. Sign 4 suggests a palm, as we saw at Nucu-Fundu Peșterii. The hand and the palm play an important role in human symbolism: it is the means to use tools, it is lifted to the heavens to beckon for the divine grace, it caresses but also punishes, it creates order; on the womb it suggests protection. During the Middle Ages, it served as proof of innocence. We don't know how many of these attributes first came into being in prehistory, but it is our duty to look for questions and answers.

On other megalithic blocks in the area of the sacred mountains of Buzău we find certain renderings of the rectangle, the parallelogram (fig. 3a1-a3) as well as the „Y” (fig. 2d, cat. 32 a.s.o and cod. 131³⁶). Occasionally, the sign presents a cross etched inside, a symbol which we find in the rock art of Valcamonica (fig. 3c).

Quite frequently the signs of certain heavenly bodies appear on these blocks (fig. 2d cat. 29.30), suggesting the sun – the warm light, the stars – the cold light or the Chi Rho christogram – the light of faith. In the DS there are several variants of the DS 50k symbol (with variants K1, K2, K4, 50l etc.), which suggest different aspects of light.



³⁵ At Parța in Habitation 8, sacred complex on an idol, Lazarovici Gh. et alii 2001, I.2, 276.

³⁶ Mândricel, Bortaș 2008, 183-184: Sign which appears in the Neolithic on: *small altars* Lazarovici Gh. 1979, pl. XXIII/C1: L 142, 2/1-3, the Klein collection; jar bottom with signs Roska 1941, pl. 135/9-10; *Mount Teasc, Stone 13* and the *Stone 34 altar*; Lazarovici Gh. et alii 2014, fig. 31d, 55.

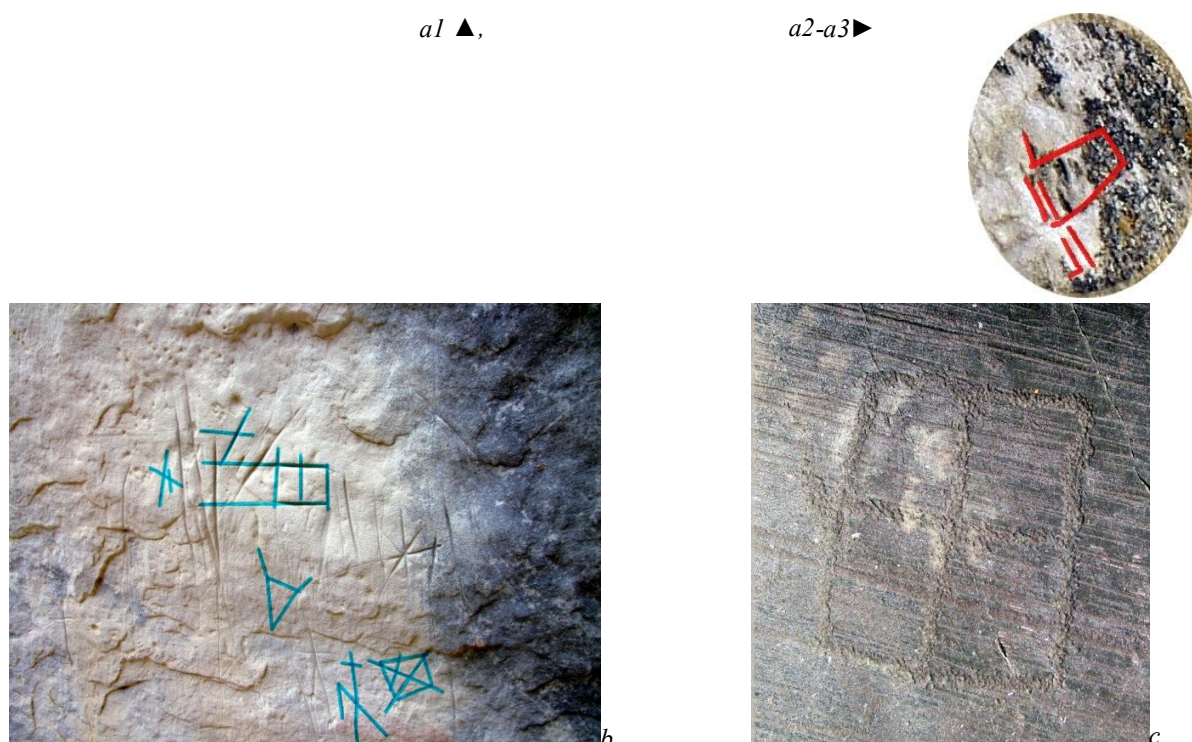


Fig. 9: a, Megalith with signs, details a, a3; b, Stone 1 with signs from Culmea Broscarului 1; c, Valcamonica Rock 35, photo Maxim Z.

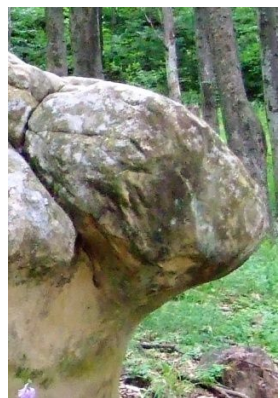
On other megalithic blocks there are signs (fig. 9a) which picture the square, the rectangle (fig. 9.a1-2), the Chi Rho christogram or the sun (fig. 9b), but also signs that appear at first sight to be abstract. Alongside them the cross appears, which is usually considered Christian, but it has been present since ancient times, especially when it is not in its usual position (fig. 9b). We do not analyze all analogies for signs/symbols as they appear, but in order to classify them and understand them as well as possible, and also in order to understand their symbolism, it is necessary to refer to certain analogies which support our hypotheses.

Another frequent theme in rock art is animals, specifically those that were hunted in prehistory. Often times, these rock scenes are hunting narratives, other times they are symbols of the gods that protect the game (such as we later come to know in the person of Artemis or Diana³⁷).

³⁷ *** DEAVR 1980, Bendis.



a



b



b



Fig. 10: a, „The Toad” megalith from Martiria; b, The Crucea Spătarului cross with a stag (photo Diana Gavrilă).

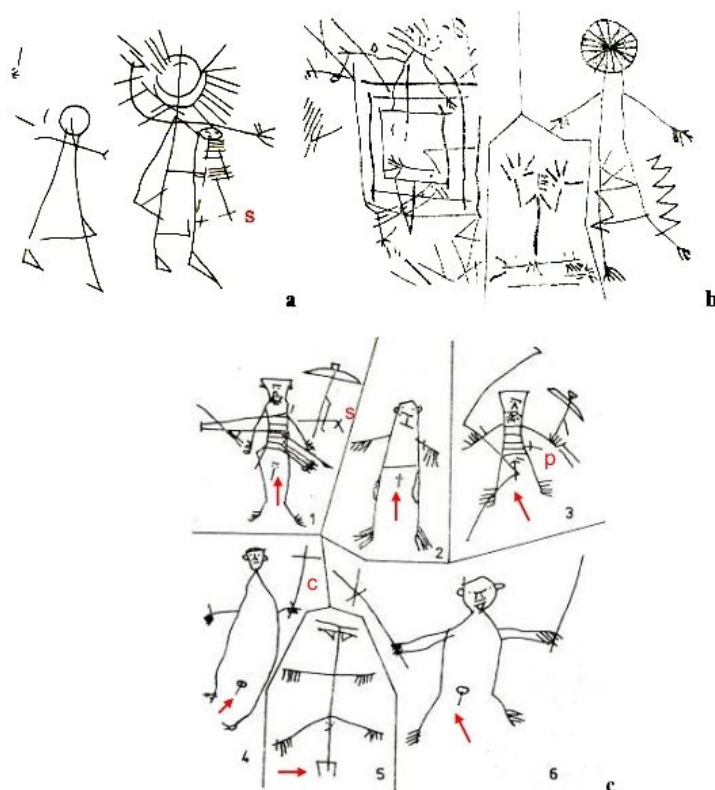


Fig. 27 - Analogies pour les gravures de la grotte « avec incisions. » a : personnage gravé Coll de la Font-Roja, Caixas (Pyrénées Catalanes); b: diverses manières de rendre la figure humaine en relation avec le culte du soleil ; c : 1-figure anthropomorphe trouvée sur le plafond de Auvent du Chevalier (Essonne); 2-gravure de pierre de Arad (Israel); 3-figure humaine soléiforme à tête représentée par une roue avec multiples rayons et nombreux points de Peyra Escrita, la commune de Formiguera (Pyrénées-Orientales); tous les silhouettes présente le signe du sexe masculin vers la partie inférieure du corps, comme la silhouette humaine soléiforme de la grotte « cu incizii » (fig. 24-25) (d'après J. Abélanet, 1986).

Fig. 11. Analogies for the Crucea Spătarului sword: the arrow marks the male sex, s= sword, p= dagger, c= cross (apud Cârciumar 2010, 64, fig. 27).

On a megalith that Diana Gavrilă named „The Toad from Martiria”, because of the appearance of the site, we note certain human interventions: the marking of the eye on the right side by a rhombus, and behind the head, in an alveole, there seems to be the head of a hart, a symbol which appears on another megalith on the peak of Crucea Spătarului (eng. *The Cross of the Arms Keeper*) (fig. 4b).

Several authors have drawn attention to the artifacts from Crucea Spătarului³⁸. We must not forget that the Dacian mythology presents Bendis as an *interpretatio romana* of Diana (Artemis). Bendis is a thraco-dacian goddess represented on numerous terracotta, gold or bronze discoveries.

In the area there are several discoveries dating from the Thraco-Dacian period, but there are also numerous other discoveries starting with the Copper and Bronze ages, from the foot of the mountains (Sărata Monteoru) all the way to the heart of the mountains in Găvanele. From other sites we have a grinder and a fragment of Dacian grinder made of volcanic rock (tuff). In those areas (near Iosif's church) there are salty and sulphurous springs.

³⁸ Tonciulescu 1998, 62E.49; Mândricel, Bortaș 2008, 72-73; Gavrilă 2012, 112.

On the same area we note two signs with the appearance of a „cross” (markings 2, 3-4). Perhaps fig. 4b.3 is a Christian sign, but the sign with marking 2 doesn't have the same meaning, even though the technique used to chisel it indicates a metal instrument. According to Diana Gavrilă, this could be a weapon, a sword with a handle similar to a „cross”. On parietal art the hunter's hand is pictured as a weapon with a handle shaped like a cross, a sword or a dagger; however this is the guard which protects the hand ³⁹, and it is carried in hand or around the waist, fig. 4c. We don't know how the legend of the *Spatharios* (Arms Keeper) was born, but in early medieval pictography, the arms keeper was the one that carried and looked after his lord's armor.

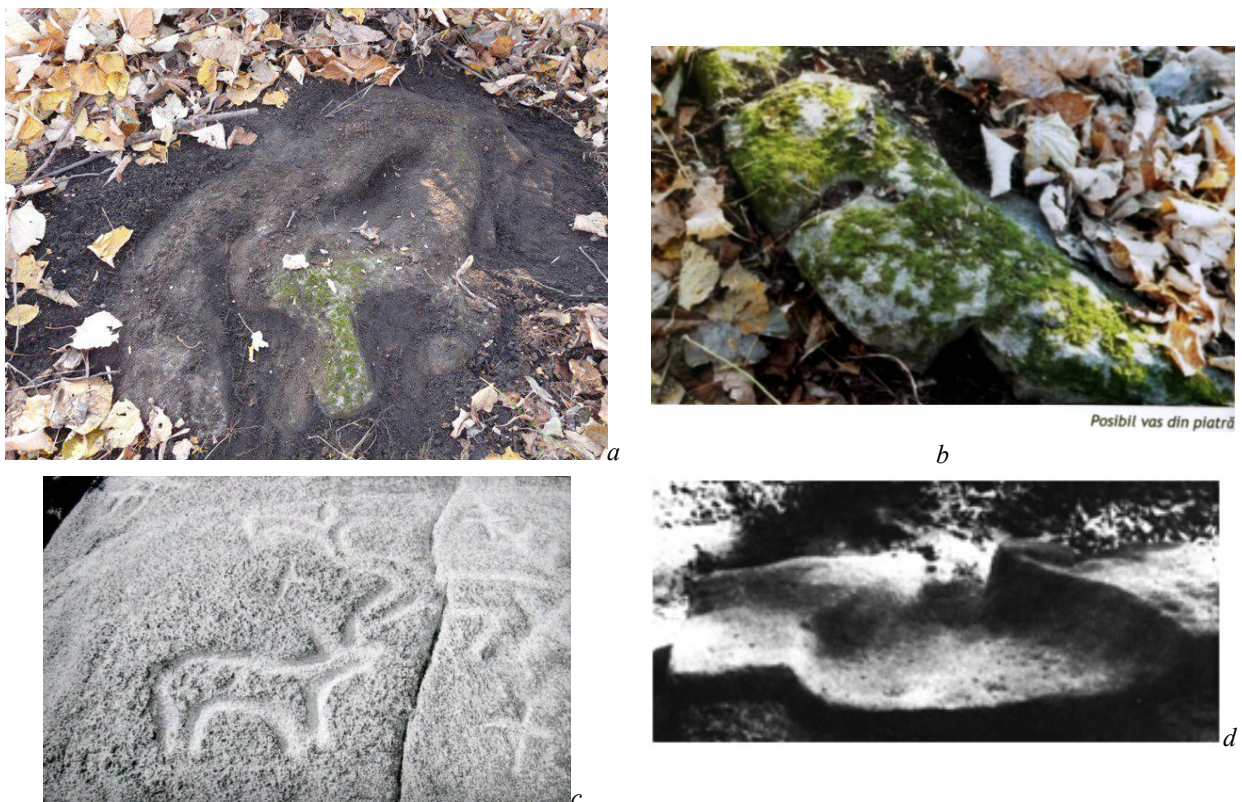


Fig. 12: a, The stag from Buzioru, apud Gavrilă 2012, 152; c, Campo Lameiro in Galicia, Spain (fig. 5c), apud Giovanni Bessone Missione CeSMAP Pinerolo; d, blood vat from Soarele de andezit (Andesite Sun), Sarmizegetusa Regia.

The hart appears on megalithic blocks in the area of the Buzău mountains, at the border between Buzioru and Cozieni, on the road leading to Zapodiile hamlet. The image there is sculpted on a block of stone⁴⁰. The hart is artfully made in relief (fig. 12a). The representation of a stone jar is also present there

³⁹ Cârciuamaru 2010, 64, fig. 27.

⁴⁰ Gavrilă 2011, 151-152.

(fig. 12b). They are both made on a material similar to concretions. The stone jar could be a cultic piece⁴¹, unless it is nature-made. For this reason we must research it in the future. Such pieces have been discovered in the sacred areas of the Orăștie mountains, dating from the time of the Dacian civilization (fig. 12d)⁴².

The manner of relief-sculpture reminds us of the stag with fantastic antlers from Campo Lameiro, Pinerolo, in Galicia, Spain (fig. 12c)⁴³. In our rock art, such images were found in places like Buzioru⁴⁴. We must also note that in the vicinity of the Campo Lameiro piece there were two crosses (fig. 12c), and they were not dated from modern times. Therefore all these signs must not always be considered to be modern.

In our research travels along the path towards the terrace where the monastery is, we found prehistoric and bronze age fragments, difficult to attribute to a certain culture, however. A settlement belonging to the Monteoru culture is mentioned and probed there⁴⁵.

The pentagram on Broscarului 2 peak – above Lingurești village

Climbing down from the rock named „*Inima*” (eng. „*The Heart*”) from *Culmea Broscarului* toward Lingurești village, at the edge of some rocky ridges, which give the impression of fortresses (but they are naturally-made, quite frequent in the entire area of the Broscarului peak), we noticed several engraved signs on a megalithic block⁴⁶. Some resemble a pentagram, others seem to merge together, they picture a sun or a star with 7 rays, reminding us of the Crater constellation.

This theme appears several times on the *Culmea Broscarului* 1 megalith (fig. 2d, cat. 29-30). Image 6a.5 could represent a man, as it appears in the DS cod. 49g, or at Stone 16 on mount Teasc⁴⁷. The

⁴¹ At Țaga, in a settlement of the Zau culture from the middle Neolithic, disk-shaped concretions were split at the foundations of a fortress which was built with stone foundations and a wooden structure. These were brought from cca. 200 m away and were set in place as a basis for the pillars which supported the structure of the fortress. Upon first impression, this seemed to have all the elements of a sanctuary. References Lazarovici Gh., Maxim 2014, 29-31, fig. 14-15. The pieces from the area of the concretions must be carefully analyzed.

⁴² At *Soarele de andezit* (the Andesite Sun), there were some stone vats around the edges, which according to some, had the purpose of gathering the blood of the sacrificed animals, which then flowed into a water canal and on to the Sergetia river. In the Cluj museum there is a monumental stone vat from the Orăștie mountains.

⁴³ Giovanni Bessone 1970, in Missione CeSMAP Pinerolo 1970 Campo Lameiro, Fragas.

⁴⁴ We haven't researched the area yet.

⁴⁵ Information kindly given by Diana Gavrilă.

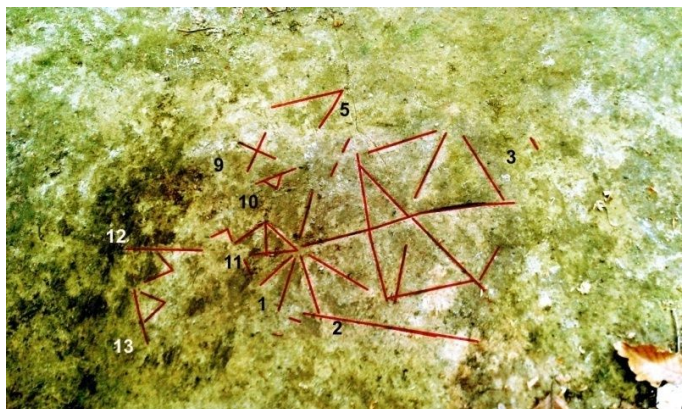
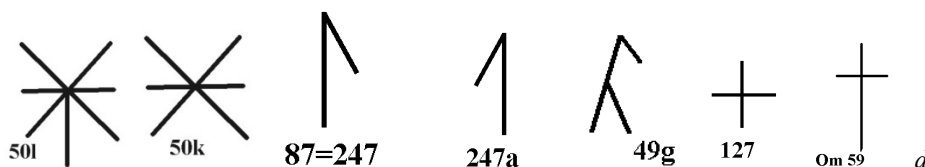
⁴⁶ Because of the light and the fact that some signs are eroded or covered with moss and lichen, the photographs aren't suitable. It is necessary to clean the stones and catalogue them. We should compare the differences between photographs taken in different light conditions. For this reason at this moment we do not go on to make a comparative analysis.

⁴⁷ Lazarovici Gh. et alii 2014, fig. 32a.

piece in fig. 6a.8 could be the image of a dagger, or a spear tip or an arrow. On the rock there are other signs, but in our image, the light was not favorable. The DS 247 and 247a hooks have analogies on the bottom of a jar from phase Vinča C, at Vršac – At⁴⁸; we believe this is the only one that is a symbol, not a sign. Signs 2 and 18 also appear on Stone 1 at *Culmea Broscarului* and other places.



Fig. 13. *Culmea Broscarului* site 2: a, photo Diana Gavrilă; b, photo Lazarovici Gh.; d, analogies for the symbols.



⁴⁸ Jovanović Š. 1981, 134: associated by J. Makkay to the Turdaş „writing”: Makkay 1990, pl. 35/XXIV.1.

The eagle. Colți – Vârful Bâi. The loop ring⁴⁹. The Pietrele Mirăului stones

An important archeological find is a golden piece (fig. 14) which was found on a hilltop with the occasion of installing a relay. The site overlooks the valley and is visible from the paths in the Sibiciului Valley, from the Colți village and from the surrounding ridges, such as Culmea Broscarului, which overlooks it. According to information received from the discoverers, and according to the location of the site, it is possible that the place served as a gravesite or a cairn⁵⁰. The edges of the loop ring seem to be shaped like an eagle beak, and a few lines on the head suggests the idea of eagle feathers. The symbol of the eagle is not frequent, but it is also not absent from neolithic symbolism.



Fig. 14. Loop ring, Colți- Vârful Bâi, Fig. 15. The Pietrele Mirăului stones. according to Sîrbu et alii 2012.

As far as the decoration style, the piece reminds us of the loop rings with bull heads from Târgu Mureș and the golden bracelet at Dipșa⁵¹ (from the middle Bronze Age⁵²). The decoration makes it resemble the loop rings from the Argeș county treasure⁵³. The piece seems to have been made by the smiths that worked in Transylvania. Perhaps the analysis of the gold and of the Bistrița-Dipșa piece will offer more exact data.

The mythology of the eagle relates to the relationship between Heaven and Earth. The earliest PPN mythologies give us data regarding reincarnation⁵⁴. The eagle is present in the Neolithic at Çatal Höyük,

⁴⁹ Sîrbu et alii 2012, 362, fig. 5h; *** Aurul și Argintul 2014, 209.

⁵⁰ On the basis of certain objects, our colleagues from Buzău suggest a bronze-age necropolis, Monteoru culture.

⁵¹ *** Aurul și Argintul 2014, 64.

⁵² Prähistorische Goldschätze 1999, 53, fig. 25 Kat. 28-29.

⁵³ *** Aurul și Argintul 2014, 58-59

⁵⁴ Nevali Çori, Hauptmann 2007, 87; Hauptmann, Schmidt 2007, 67.

in sanctuary 21, but also at other sites across Anatolia⁵⁵. Images of the eagle appear at Turdaş⁵⁶ and at Ronaţ in Banat⁵⁷.

The Pietrele Mirăului stones

A significant presence in the area of our research is at Pietrele Mirăului, in Brăeşti⁵⁸. This is a natural stone, on which symmetrical holes were made at some point in the past. Some natural imprints on the upper part of the rock, like in the gold piece above, give the impression of feathers. The idea of associating it with the eagle comes from these feathers and holes, added to the location on the top of the mountain.

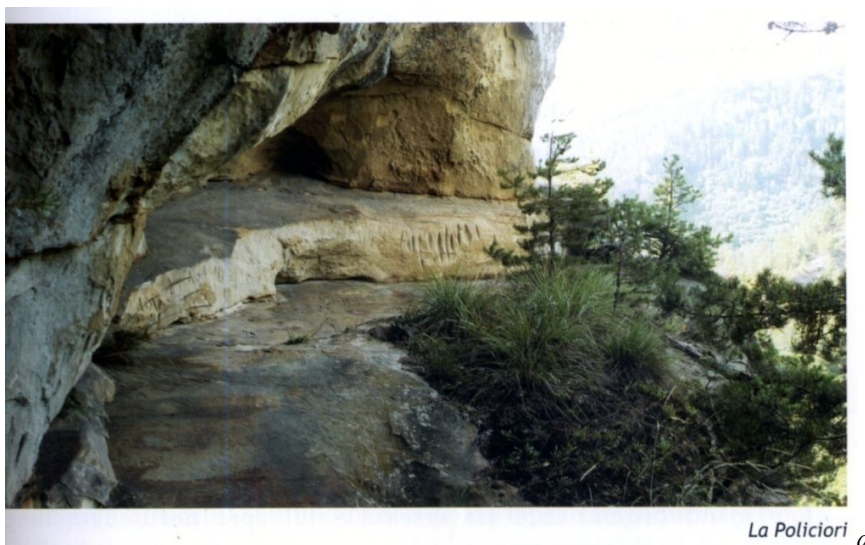
⁵⁵ Mellaart 1965.

⁵⁶ Roska 1941, pl. 34.5; Winn 1981, 283, fig. 203; Maxim et alii 2009, 154, cat. 107, see the commentaries there; Tărtăria, Sacred Bird, Soul Bird-Luca 2016, 161, fig. 121, dwelling XII, ditch of 13th century.

⁵⁷ Vlassa 1976 (republished 1970, 1971), 182, fig. 20.1 analyzed another piece with eagle beak, fig. 21.2, as well as feathers that finish off with points on the front; Lazarovici Gh., Lazarovici C.-M. 2014, 221, fig. 60b.

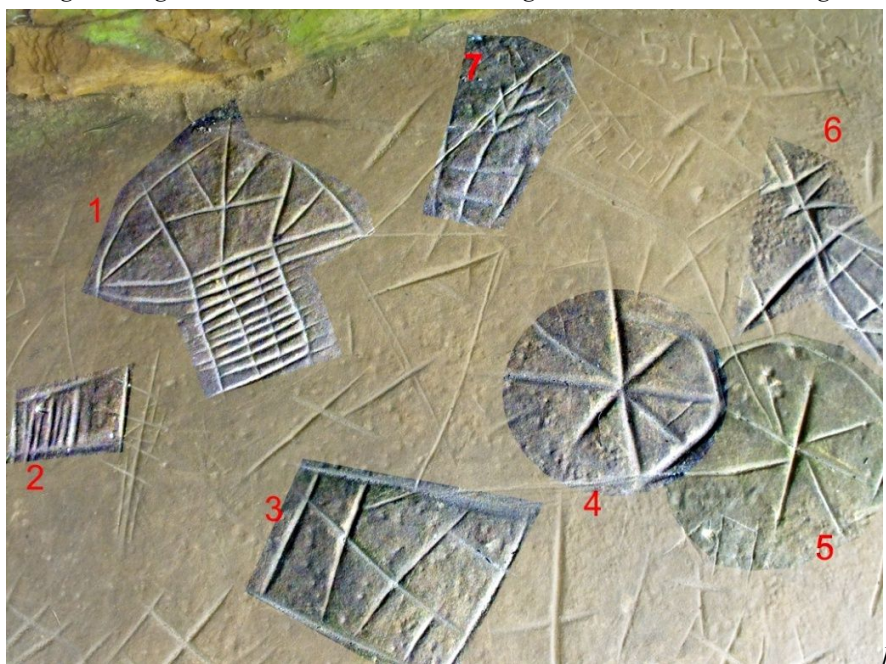
⁵⁸ Gavrilă 2012, 137, photo; and 248, Mirăul sulphurous spring.

La Policiori-Scobitori, Ruginoasa village, Brăești township (fig. 16)



La Policiori a

Fig. 16. Ruginoasa – La Policiori: a, according to Gavrilă 2012, 131; b, signs.



b

At Ruginoasa, across the street from the school, in a site called *Scobitori*, less than 80 m away there is a two-tiered cliff, carved by the winds out of limestone which alternates with sandy strata.

The deposits and cementing created a bark (inclined towards the outside) which favored engraving objects and signs.

The images of signs, houses, churches, abstract signs and people's names come from all ages. This cliff is a reference for many studies, the

most recent of which belong to Ilie Mândricel and Victor Bortaș (fig. 7c), as well as to Diana-Liana Gavrilă (fig. 7a)⁵⁹. We have taken tens of photographs and details which we will analyze on another occasion. From the drawings, we note a house plan (fig. 7b.1), several quadrangle enclosures (fig. 7b.2-3), christograms (fig. 7b.4-5), churches (fig. 7b.6, 7c), icons and numerous other signs. We also note the presence of alveoli on the edge of some floors, caused by water dripping off the rock.

After the first visit, several signs caught our attention. Of these, some we have seen in both sites at *Culmea Broscarului* (the christograms and the stars). Others are curious for our area. It is necessary to catalogue them and to try to establish a stratigraphy for the series of engravings.

The abri has two levels. From its edges one can survey the valley and the neighboring areas. Inside, one can squat and elsewhere stand.



Fig. 17: a, La Policiori, cathedrals, churches, houses etc. (according to Mândricel, Bortaș 2008); b-c, study partners, film director Leonard Tonitza and Diana Gavrilă.

The house model and enclosures

The house model doesn't appear in our area, nor on the rock or cliff art which we have visited until now. However, it appears frequently at Valcamonica, in several very suggestive images. Here, a narrower part of the house is dug in the ground, and the overstructure has roofing. According to the weapons of the hunters which are associated to the houses, these images were made during the metal age, which is the Bronze and Iron Ages of the Thraco-Dacian civilizations here.

⁵⁹ Mândricel, Bortaș 2008, 143-151; Gavrilă 2012, 131.

We do not hold direct proof from Romania, where reconstructions lack because most archeologists are reserved when it comes to them. However, there are a few discoveries which indicate habitations of similar form, even shockingly so, to those in Valcamonica.

We refer first of all to Liubcova, where a Dacian terrace-settlement was identified following research and surveys on a very steep slope. The settlement includes fortification systems, traces of houses and a series of holes. On an equally steep slope, at the entrance to the Cheile Turenilor gorge, M. Rotea dug out such a slope house, believed to belong to the Bronze Age⁶⁰.

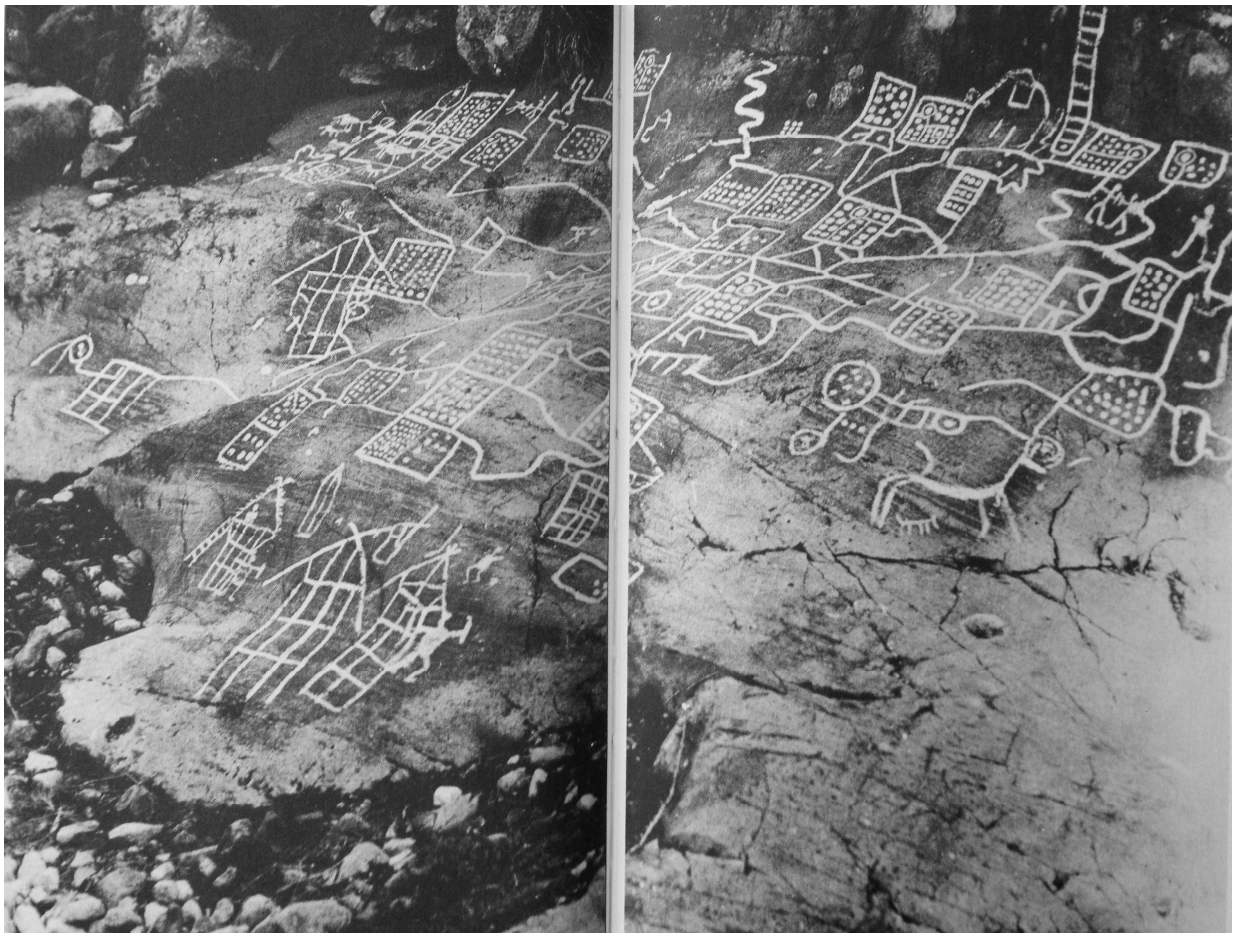


Fig. 18. Valcamonica, The Bedolina rock, apud Anati 1961.

⁶⁰ The research to see if there are also other complexes did not continue on the slope.

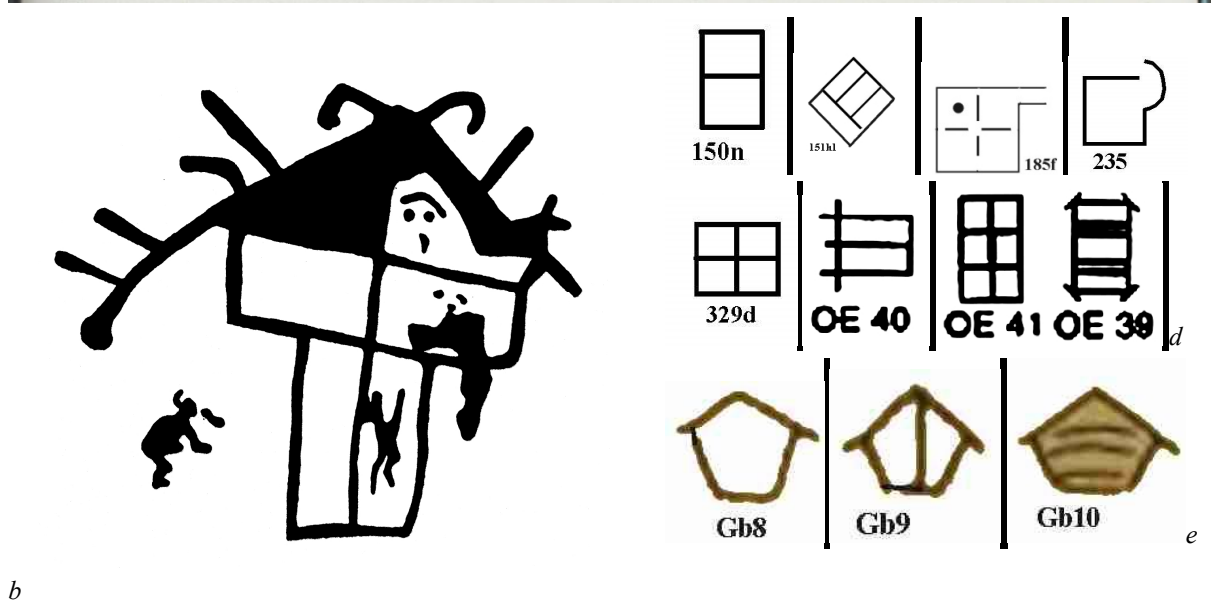


Fig. 19. a-b, Valcamonica; c, DS signs and symbols (Lazarovici codes); d, Old European (Haarmann); e, Paleolithic houses (apud Leroi-Gourhan).

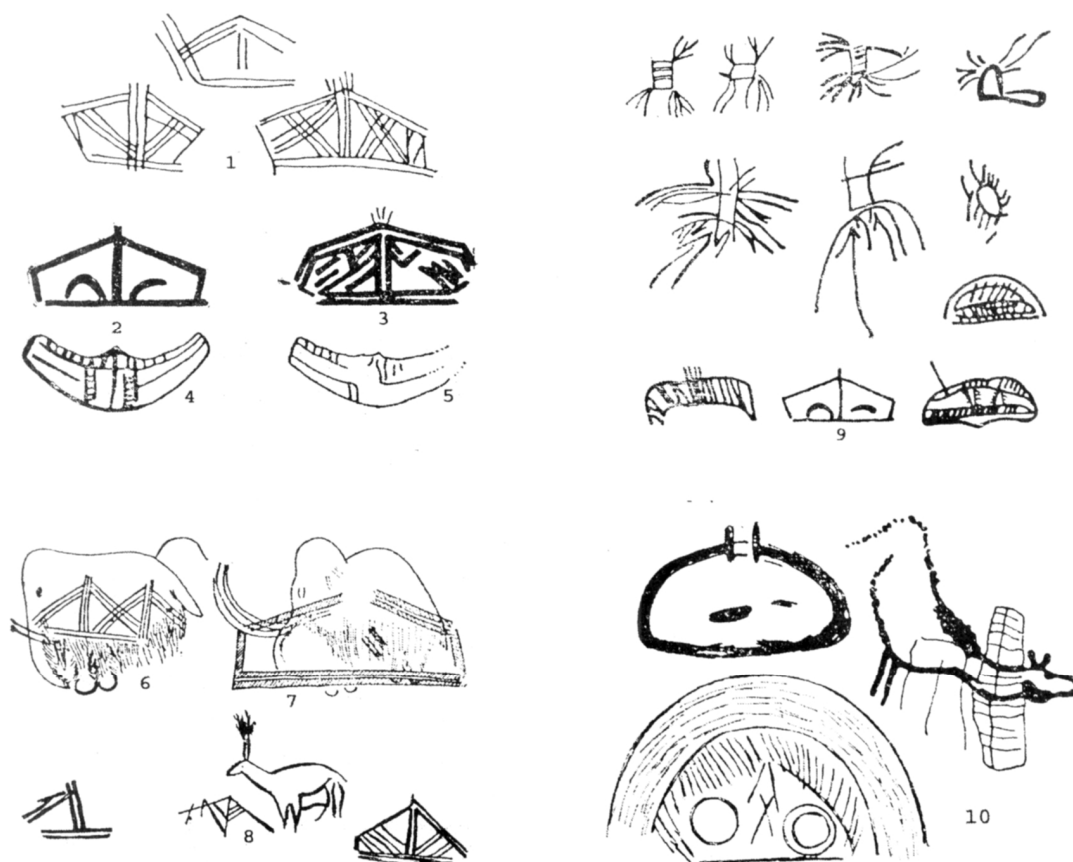


Fig. 105 – Semne tectiforme din peșterile *Font-de-Gaume* (1-3) și *El Castillo* (4-5), semn tectiform asociat cu un mamut gravat din peștera *Bernifal* (6), mamut într-o „capcană” din peștera *Font-de-Gaume* (7), căprioară încadrată de tectiforme din peștera *Combarelles* (8), semne tectiforme interpretate a fi „curse pentru spirite” (9), tectiforme din peștera *Font-de-Gaume*, interpretate drept curse pentru vânărea animalelor și căprioară din peștera *La Pasiega* care pare prinsă într-o cursă.

Fig. 20. Images from parietal art: houses, traps, enclosures (apud Cărciumaru 2006, fig. 105).

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FROM PENTALOBULAR BODY-TEMPLES TO MAGIC PENTAGRAMS

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Abstract: The demonstration in the present article will develop in a direction that practically represents the reverse of the one indicated in the title above. The main reason for such a direction is that today's readers (and even specialists) will automatically refer pentagrams to witchcraft, freemasonry or Satanism. Also, what dictionaries and web sites provide in regard to *pentagram* (or *pentacle*) will hardly go deeper than medieval Gnosticism and Pythagorean symbolism. However, as demonstrated below, sufficient evidence indicates that the pentagram reflects the stylized outline of a divine body which originally inspired the plans of prehistoric pentalobular temples.

Keywords: pentagram, pentacle, symbolism, Greek tradition, pentalobular outlines.

The present article is based on the talk I gave, under the same title, at the 2015 International Symposium *From Symbols to Signs*, which took place in Suceava. My demonstration started from a very concise definition, namely the one to be found in the *pentacle* entry of AHDEL 1973:

pentacle: A five-pointed star formed by five straight lines connecting the five vertices of a pentagon and enclosing another pentagon in the completed figure. Also called "pentagram" [...].

The definition above exclusively refers to abstract-geometric features of the "five-pointed star" which – with various sizes and colors – occurs all around world, from the huge red star on top of the main tower of Kremlin, to the stars painted on American bombers or embroidered on quite a number of national flags (over thirty of them).

Let me first address the designation of "star" used for the symbolic representation under discussion. One important thing to say about that issue is that a special sign included in the earliest version of the Sumerian script (ca. 3000 BC) was used with the meaning of *an* 'divinity'.¹ That early representation graphically looked like a combination of two superposed

¹ See representations given in www.google.ro/search?q=sumerian

crosses with the same center; it appeared to be a stylized image of a star with eight rays. In a later (cuneiform) version the same sign was reduced to a single cross. In Mesopotamian traditions that star-like sign was meant especially to represent the planet Venus, as an attribute of powerful Inanna/Ishtar, goddess of love, war, fertility and lust. However, what we should observe at this point is that both the early eight-rayed representation and the latter cross-like one were symmetrical figures and thus they differed from the five-pointed figure now known as pentagram.

If we want to learn more about the pentagram we may resort to a comprehensive dictionary of symbols, namely Chevalier and Gheerbrant's,² whose entry on *pentagramă* (in the Romanian version) contains abundant material directly or indirectly regarding the origins and the evolution of the symbol that now appears as a geometric five-pointed star. According to the above-mentioned entry, the following features appear to be specific to the pentagram (my translation):

Its symbolism is multiple, but it is always based on the number five, which expresses the union of unequal things [...]. The five arms of the pentagram bring together [...] the number three, that is, the masculine principle, and the number two, which corresponds to the feminine principle. [...] The Pythagorean pentagram – which became, in Europe, the attribute of Gnostic Hermes – appears as a symbol of knowledge [...].

As we can see, the interpretation remains at a rather abstract level; and, as regards origins and early variants, the authors of the dictionary went only as far back as classical antiquity and European Middle Ages. To mark is the reference to the magic number five; therefore I will add some of the significant things the same dictionary has to say in its entry on *cinci* (five):

The symbolism of 5 derives from the fact that [...] it represents the sum of the first even number and the first uneven one (2+3) [...]. It is a sign of union, a nuptial number, according the Pythagoreans [...]. Five is also the symbol of man (since, with stretched arms, he appears to be disposed in five parts [...]). The pentagonal harmony of the Pythagoreans marked the architecture of Gothic cathedrals. In the hermetic symbolism, the five-pointed star or the flower with five petals are placed in the center of the cross formed by the four elements, since it represents the quintessence or the ether.

² I used the Romanian edition of 1993.

For all the rather abstract-philosophic beginning of the passage above, it eventually moves to touchable reality by its references to the shape of a man “with stretched arms” and to “the flower with five petals.” In regard to “man,” I will show below that we should rather say “woman” when we refer to the human silhouette that may have a connection with the origins of the pentagram. As for the five-petaled flowers,³ they represent a clue to the fact that asymmetrical arrangements of five components do occur in nature, as visible in starfish (that is, in creatures classified as *Asteroidea*, which have five arms radiating from a central disk); a similar arrangement exists, rather “invisibly,” in what is probably the most symbolic European fruit, namely the apple. I will again resort to the Chevalier/ Gheerbrant dictionary, whose entry on *măr* (*apple*) contains an interesting quotation:

According to Father E. Bertrand: “The symbolism of the apple relies on its interior, whose cells, containing the seeds, are arranged in the shape of a five-pointed star [...]; therefore the initiates considered it to be the fruit of knowledge and of liberty. [...] Besides, the inclusion of the pentagram – as symbol of the spiritual man – within the pulp of the fruit also symbolizes the involution of spirit to carnal matter.”

I do not know to what kind of “initiates” Father E. Bertrand referred to (Pythagoreans?); neither do I know why the apple should be considered as symbol of both “knowledge” (according to an the European interpretation of a fatal event in the Bible) and “liberty.” Anyway, the fact that apples *really* contain a pentagram-like pattern is significant, no matter what one could say about that pattern as “symbol of the spiritual man,” or about the “carnal” implications of the fruit under discussion. For the present demonstration it is five-seeded apples and five-petaled flowers that show the way to representations that were to become pentagrams as well as to the primeval “symbolism of 5.” What should also be mentioned here is that a certain type of leaves was also considered to have symbolic implications.

One of the best-informed scholars in the field of Greek mythology, Ranke-Graves,⁴ comments on an episode of the *Iliad* in which the seer Kalchas decodes some ill omen (about the long duration of the war against Troy) in the fact that a snake destroyed a bird’s nest placed in a sacred plane tree (Ranke-Graves 2008: 610, my translation):

³ The connection between the name of the rose and the ornamental element known as rosette (from French *rosette* ‘little rose’) is undeniable. However, unlike the wild-rose flower, all images of ancient and event pre-ancient rosettes that I have checked show an even number of “petals” (four, six, eight, twelve or sixteen).

No commentator has considered it worth explaining why the bird's nest of Kalchas was in a plane tree and why it should be torn down by a snake; the truth is that snakes will shed their skin and get a new one every year, just as plane trees will – and this fact turns both of them into symbols of rebirth [...]. Although later Apollo claimed the plane tree for himself, it actually had been the holy tree of the goddess of Crete [...], since its leaves look like green blessing hands [...].

Ranke-Graves most probably was right about the fact that, by its bark-shedding characteristic, the plane tree had a symbolic implication that was similar to that of the snake. We may, however, have some doubts about the plane-tree leaves being symbolic due to the fact that they look like “blessing hands.” It is true that even botanists designate a certain type of lobed and veined leaves as “palmate,” by referring their shape to the one of the human palm (with fingers extended). It is also true that plants with five-lobed leaves were associated with important divinities of classical ancient times: the fig tree was sacred to Demeter and Dionysos, the vine to Dionysos and the plane tree to the divinity presented by Ranke-Graves as “the goddess of Crete.” The latter most probably was the same goddess of female fertility and motherhood who subsequently became known to the ancient Greeks as Rhea (wife of Kronos and mother of Zeus). In regard to plane-tree leaves, I am of the opinion that their sacredness did not rely on their resemblance to the human palm, but simply on the fact that they have five lobes. It was pentalobular outlines and structures that were regarded as sacred as early as the Neolithic and the Copper-Age of Europe, as I will point out below.

Let me first comment on the plane-tree symbolism, since it is not as well known as the one attached to the fig-tree and the vine. And I will insist on this issue since it also has some connection with Romanian traces of archaic dendrolatry, as visible, for instance, in the fact that the two kinds of trees presented as participants in the “cosmic wedding” of a well-known Romanian “ballad” (*Miorița*) were *brazi și păltinași*. Among today's Romanians, the fir tree (*brad*) still has ritual-cultural functions, as I pointed out in Poruciuc 2010: 114-116; those functions as well as the Romanian term *brad* appear to have prehistoric roots. Such aspects are not as obvious in the case of Romanian *paltin* ‘sycamore maple’ (*Acer pseudoplatanus*),⁵

⁴ I used the 2008 German version of the book on Greek mythology that was first published in English, under the signature of *Robert Graves*, in 1955.

⁵ A close relative of the Romanian *paltin* is the North American maple tree whose pentalobular leaf became the central element on the national flag of Canada. I doubt that the twentieth-century Canadian officials who promoted the creation of such a flag were inspired by either prehistoric symbols or Pythagorean concepts; but the political choice of the maple leaf as a national emblem is remarkable in itself.

although an outstanding ethnologist does have reasons to state that the tree under discussion should be included “among the sacred trees” (cf. Taloş 2001: 111). The connection between the plane tree proper and the Romanian *paltin* (as plane-like tree) concerns botany, since they both represent the genus *Platanus*, as well as etymology, since the word *paltin* actually derived, in a rather irregular way, from Latin *platanus*.⁶ Actually, the same Latin word also represents the origin of the Old French tree-name *plane* that was borrowed into Middle English (see AHDEL 1973, s.v. *plane tree*).

To return to my suggestion that Rhea’s plane tree was not sacred because its leaves looked like “blessing hands,” but simply because those leaves (like the ones of the vine, or of the fig tree) were five-lobed, I will have to resume some of my statements on the prehistoric “shapes of sacredness” discussed in chapter 3 of Poruciuc 2010. In that chapter I started from the following assumption of Marija Gimbutas (1985: 8): “The principle that the temples and the tombs were built in the likeness of the Goddess’s body and womb is the key to understanding the megalithic structures. This principle goes back to the Palaeolithic [...]” I also paid special attention to the Maltese temples of the fourth millennium BC (as discussed in Gimbutas’ major works as well as in Biaggi 1994) precisely because they clearly replicate the stylized outline of the Great Goddess’s body. Architecturally, the twin temples of Ggantija on Gozo (c. 3600 BC) may be defined as *pentalobular*, since they show five lobes. More precisely (see Fig. 1), they demonstrate a superior trefoil – that is, a combination of three semicircular apses representing head-and-breasts, which could be reached through an entrance placed between two inferior lobes representing the plump legs of the Goddess. That entrance actually symbolizes a birth-door.

⁶ In its turn, Latin *platanus* represents a borrowing of Greek *platanos*, from *platus* ‘broad’, the reference being to the broad leaves of the tree under discussion. As for Romanian, besides its native *paltin* (inherited from Latin) it also has *platan* as a neologism (from French *platane*, itself a borrowing from Latin). The latter was borrowed into Romanian as a designation of “exotic” plane trees such as *Platanus orientalis* and *Platanus occidentalis* (cf. Ciorănescu 2001, s.v. *platan*).

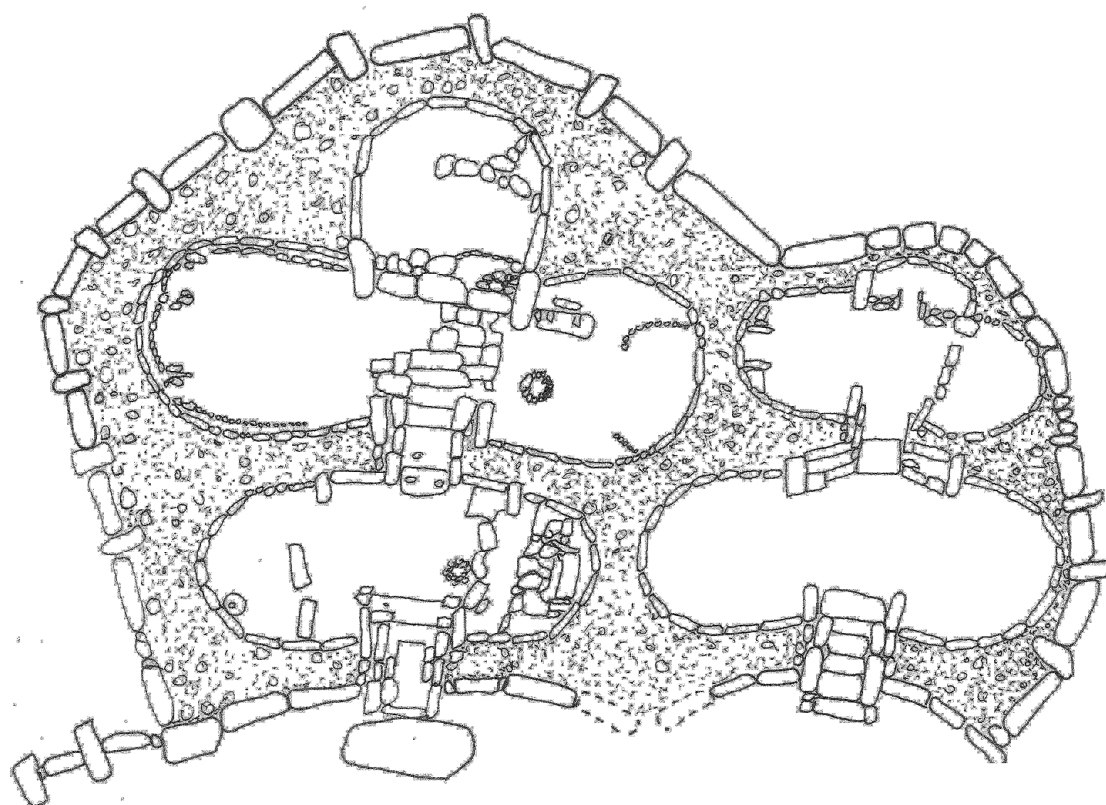


Fig. 1: The two pentalobular temples of Ggantija, Gozo, Malta, 4th millennium BC (after Gimbutas 1991: 177).

Although Maltese temples are the most refined structures representing female symbolism, they may not have been the oldest in Europe. In the more roughly drawn plan of the fifth-millennium-BC megalithic tomb of West Kennet, England (see Gimbutas 1991: 217), details such as head, neck, waist and legs can be discerned. The womb-tomb under discussion contained disarticulated skeletons that were placed (probably by a secondary-burial practice) in all lobes except the superior chamber, that is, the projection of the divine head as holy of holies. The same megalithic tradition appears in a slightly different type of tomb, namely that of certain *cairns* of prehistoric Ireland. They exhibit no trefoil sector, but in front of the birth-door there is a “court” that stands for “the space between the Goddess's open legs,” while the passage-and-chambers stand for “her vagina and uterus” (Gimbutas 1991: 154). The earliest known versions of such a projection of an open-legged divine mother lying on her back were discovered on the site of Lepenski Vir on the Danube (ca. 6000 BC), in the Iron Gate region of Serbia (Gimbutas 1989: 157). More than fifty roughly A-shaped shrines were found there,

each showing two rows of stones (the legs of the sacred A), placed as to form a “court” and to lead the way to a symbolic birth-door.

Between the very early (Mesolithic, or “proto-Neolithic”) shrines of Lepenski Vir and the five-chambered tomb of West Kennet – clearly related to the later (more sophisticated) pentalobular temples of Malta – there are at least two millennia. But they all reflect Old European traditions centering upon the symbolism of a Great Mother (that is, a prehistoric proto-Rhea) who gives birth, then takes back in death, in order to give birth again. We may assume that, several millennia before our time, both Malta and England had sacred edifices whose plans contained a superior trefoil and an inferior pair of lobes between which the entrance was set (on the same axis as the head-lobe, placed at the opposite and secluded end). The persistence of such an outline is worthy of consideration. What we cannot possibly know is exactly when the symbolic pentalobular outline was geometrically stylized into a magic pentagram. Possibly that was done in pre-ancient times, when an abstract idea of “pentagonal harmony” was taking shape; it was an idea that was to become dear to Pythagoreans and subsequently to makers of Gothic cathedrals (see third quotation above). But the sacredness of the pentagram certainly has something to do with the mentality of Old Europeans who would build pentalobular shrines and temples as projections of a supreme divinity. It was the mentality of prehistoric people who could sense the outline of the Great Mother’s body not only in temples hidden underground but also in the seed-arrangement of apples as well as in five-lobed leaves and five-petaled flowers. In conclusion, as I propounded in a previous article,⁷ before discussing symbols and signs, we should do our best to discover the symbolic *things* whose peculiar qualities made them be perceived as charged with magic power.

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